CORE SCRAMBLE

VOL. 1 CH. 1

Chapter 01 [A Sergeant of the C.O.]

IN THE WORST POSSIBLE SITUATION
POW
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE. THIS LOW-LEVEL BUG A HIGH PROBABILITY EXISTS THAT A FAR MORE POWERFUL BUG MAY BE HIDING NEARBY
THE FAREX ARE MULTIPLYING THEIR NUMBERS AT AN INCREDIBLE RATE!
POW
THERE'S TOO MANY OF THEM!
WHAT? OF COURSE I THINK ABOUT YOU
HAHA. YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME?
OKAY. HOW ABOUT YOU AND I GO FOR A NICE ROMANTIC DRIVE THROUGH THE SUBURBS THIS WEEKEND?
!
WE FOUND A HUGE BUG IN THE WALL! ESTIMATED LEVEL "B" OR HIGHER!
KU
KU
KU
KU
EVERYONE BACK OFF! THIS LOOKS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO BLOW!
WHOA!

FORCE FIELD!
STOMP
EVERYONE GET THE HELL OUT OF THE KILL RADIUS OF THE EXPLOSION!
ACK!
POW
THAT LITTLE PUNK...

CHIEF... CHIEF GAYOON!
YOUR LITTLE FORCE FIELD DROPPED MY PHONE CALL.
UGH...
SIR?!
ACK!
CA-30175 BOOT-OUT
BOOM
CA-126883 BOOT-OUT
BOOT-OUT
EEAAACK—!

KHJKK...!
POW
POW
POW
POW
POW
SLAAASH

GASP
PAT
BRIIING
I'M SORRY, BABY. ONE OF MY STUPID SOLDIERS DISCONNECTED US.
THE FAREX ARE STILL MULTI-PLYING!
BOOM
YIIIKES!
?!
FOR GOD'S SAKE, CHIEF! SOME OF OUR MEN HAVE BEEN BOOTED OUT BY THE BLAST!
PLEASE REFRAIN FROM TALKING TO YOUR GIRLFRIEND DURING A BATTLE!
I'LL MAKE OUR RESERVATIONS FOR THIS WEEKEND
SWEEP
YOU GOTTA HELP US ELIMINATE THE BUGS QUICKLY. THEY'LL SURELY MULTIPLY AFTER THAT LEVEL "B" EXPLOSION.

GRAB
FUCK... YOU LITTLE... YOU DON'T EVEN POSSESS ANY "X" ABILITY.
NAG ME ONE MORE TIME AND I'LL BOOT YOU OUT MYSELF
SHOVE
!!
THUD
KHU...
I CAN'T STAND ALL THIS PRESSURE. I CAN'T EVEN WORK. I MISS YOU SO MUCH, BABY DOLL.
CHIE...!

FORGET THIS! I'M COMING OVER NOW! I'LL BE THERE IN 30 MINUTES.
OKAY. WE'LL MEET AT THAT CAFE NEAR YOUR PLACE.
SHHH
WHAT...
NO WAY
FORMATION C--!
NO! THE BUGS ARE PROGRESSING TOO QUICKLY!!
POW
BEACK!
BOOM
CA-132132 BOOT-OUT
THE CHIEF JUST BAILED--!
DOES HE HOLD A DEATH WISH FOR ALL OF US?!

WERE DEPLOYING TEAMS 1 AND 2 TO THE DOWNTOWN AREA. WE HAVE PREDICTED THE APPEARANCE OF A STRONG HALL THERE, ALTHOUGH WE DON'T EXPECT IT TO BE AS BIG AS THE SHINCHON INCIDENT.
WE MAY RUN INTO THOSE CORE THUGS AGAIN! STAY ALERT AND DON'T GET ATTACKED FROM BEHIND!
YES, MA'AM!
B BEEP
B BEEP
WE SENSE A MAGICAL FORCE DOWN THAT ALLEY.
HALL FOUND. LEVEL D.
COORDINATES LOCKED IN.
FORCEFIELD.
3 PERSONS PER GROUP
THESE BIG OUTBREAKS ARE OCCURRING MORE FREQUENTLY LATELY. THIS HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE.
THMP
THMP
YEAH, I'VE SERVED TEN YEARS AND I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS KIND OF ACTIVITY. PLUS, OTHER PEOPLE HAVE NEVER PREVENTED US FROM SEALING THE HALLS EITHER.
I HEARD THEY'RE CORE HUNTERS AFTER ALL?
AFTER ALL?

I WASN'T IN THIS TEAM BACK THEN WHAT WERE THEY LIKE?
I NEVER ENCOUNTERED THEM EITHER. IT WAS SUCH A LARGE ARE
I DIDN'T SEE THEM MYSELF, BUT I HEARD THEY CAN BE REAL BANDITS. HEY, A MAGICAL FORCE
B-BEE
HAS APPEARED DOWN THERE.
I
IT'S HUGE...
ESTIMATED LEVEL: "B"
B-BEEP!
SUPPOSEDLY CORE HUNTERS ONLY APPEAR NEAR HALLS OF THIS MAGNITUDE.
THEY ALWAYS ATTACK OUT OF THE BLUE.
FORCEFIELD.
BACK OFF!
PLLLAK
ACK!
HA... ARE YOU OKAY?

YO, THAT GUY'S PRETTY QUICK.
THEY'RE PROBABLY ALL TENSE BECAUSE OF LAST TIME.
HEHEHE
CORE HUNTERS...!
EEK. THEY'RE HERE.
WE FOUND THEM. C-218
HOW'S THAT?
HMM... THE SIZE IS GOOD. BUT I WONDER IF IT WILL EVOLVE.
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
WHY DID YOU ATTACK US?!
WHOA
WE DID? WHEN? WE WERE JUST HOPING YOU WOULD SIT THERE AND WAIT UNTIL WE'RE DONE.
YOU DIDN'T EVEN GET HIT. WHY ARE YOU WHINING?
KEKEKEH
WHAT THE--?
WHY THAT...
WHAT DO YOU WANT? WE HAVE A DUTY TO SEAL THE HALL.
SUCH A POLITE LITTLE LADY.
THIS IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.
...

HA
LET'S JUST CONTINUE CASTING THE FORCE FIELD.
WHAT?
WHATEVER. JUST IGNORE THEM.
PZZZK
!!!
ACK!
HEY. I TOLD YOU TO JUST WAIT A LITTLE.
IF WAITING IS TOO DIFFICULT, I'LL LET YOU LEAVE IN COMFORT.
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
THE OTHERS WENT POOF AND DISAPPEARED
STOP ANNOYING US AND JUST SIT STILL.
GASP
CHIEF SONG!
SKWEEE
AH-HA.
SO, YOU'RE THE USELESS THUGS WHO BOOTED OUT MY MEN?

SQUIRM
HEY. SHE WIELDS MASTER LEVEL ABILITIES.
EEK.
WERE YOU HIT?
WHAT?
DID THEY ATTACK.
THEY DID BUT WE AVOIDED IT.
HA.
SO THEY DID, DID THEY?
POW
EEAACK!

WHY YOU...!
PLAK
KNACK
KNACK
FWOOSH
VROOSH
YOU LOST YOUR SENSE OF FEAR.
KEUK!
HOW DARE YOU! TOUCH MY MENP!
KWOOM
KWOOM

WOONGHUK, YOU STARTED ALREADY?
CH...CHIEF LEE!!
CHIEF SONG
UM... CAN WE EVEN ATTACK?
I MEAN, NO MATTER WHAT WE SHOULDN'T ATTACK PEOPLE...
KWOOM
KWOOM
AHHH~~~
WE DIDN'T RECEIVE A GO-AHEAD, SO I REALLY SHOULD STOP HER...
BUT HONESTLY, I DON'T WANT TO STOP HER.
KEH
SHE'S NOT A NOVICE SHE'LL KNOW HOW TO STOP BEFORE KILLING THEM
KWOOM
!!!
HE'S FALLING!

THOOM
HEY, HE'S A MASTER ALSO
THERE ARE TWO OF THEM?
WE NEED TO FALL BACK.
THAT HALL ISN'T READY TO BE CAPTURED ANYWAY
SHHF
WHOOSH
!!!
WHY YOU..!
TA
DA
DA
SHHH
DON'T CHASE AFTER THEM
MESS WITH US AGAIN AND YOU'LL SORELY REGRET IT!
PFT

RUMBLE
I HEARD YOU SAW THEM?!
WE WERE CHECKING THE HALL
MAN, THEY WERE SUCH BASTARDS.
CHATTER
I HEARD CHIEF SONG TAUGHT THEM A LESSON?!
OUR QUEEN!
SHE DIDN'T ATTACK THEM DIRECTLY. SHE JUST HIT STRUCTURES AROUND THEM TO SCARE THEM OFF
AWESOME! HOW DARE THEY MESS WITH US?
THEY WERE SCARED STIFF AND RAN AWAY
WE USE OUR POWERS TO DESTROY BUGS. NOT PEOPLE. THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE'RE TOO WEAK TO FIGHT BACK WHEN NECESSARY!
HOPEFULLY, THEY LEARNED THEIR LESSON AND WE WON'T BE SEEING THEIR FACES AROUND ANYMORE!
BWAHAHA
WE'RE NICE. WE DON'T WANT TO KILL THEM. THEY SIMPLY GOT WHAT THEY DESERVED
HEY, WHY DO YOU LOOK SO OUT OF IT?
AH.

I WAS WONDERING ABOUT THE SPELL THEY USED. I KNEW THAT EVERY GROUP HAS A DIFFERENT FORM, BUT...
IT WAS MY FIRST TIME SEEING ONE THAT WASN'T CIRCULAR. I CAN'T GET IT OUT OF MY MIND
OH, I SAW ONE IN SHINCHON. IT LOOKED... LIKE ELECTRICITY AND SMOKE FLOWING AT THE SAME TIME.
IT HAS NO REAL SHAPE, RIGHT?
IT ONLY PROVES THAT THEY'RE AN UNREFINED GROUP WITH NO FUNDAMENTAL DISCIPLINE.
THEIR FORM IS AWFUL. ALL THEY HAVE IS BRUTE STRENGTH.
ONE FELL FROM THE THIRD FLOOR AND ANOTHER STOPPED HIM. IT LOOKED LIKE THEY USED...
A ROPE OR SOMETHING. THE MOVEMENTS LOOKED LIKE THEY WERE USING GRAVITY. IT LEFT QUITE AN IMPRESSION.
FROM THE THIRD FLOOR? WE CAN DO THAT MUCH EASILY!
HALF GRAVITY, HALF ELASTICITY, TENSION, AND...
WAIT! IF YOU USED POWERS IN THAT ORDER, THE TARGET WOULD BOUNCE RIGHT OUT.
PEW!
PEW
PEW
REDUCE TARGET'S SPEED AND PRODUCE A VECTOR
THEN WHAT? HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU NEED?
COMPETITOR ALERT
OH, YEAH. THE HALL THAT THOSE GUYS MARKED IN SHINCHON.
THAT'S PROBABLY LIKE FIREWORKS.
IT MUST BE NICE COMPARED TO THE SMOKE KIND

I SAY HE FALLS AFTER EIGHT HOURS, GIVE OR TAKE.
7 HOURS 37 MINUTES LATER
PLOP

THE ENTIRE TEAM BOOTED OUT-!!
THAT MEANS WE NEED TWO MONTHS FOR EVERYONE TO HEAL COMPLETELY
KOFF
I'M GOING TO DEMAND VACATION DAYS FOR THIS
RAGGED
I CAN'T BELIEVE THE CHIEF BAILED ON US!!!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I MUST LOOK LIKE A TOTAL WRECK
...I'M OKAY I JUST NEED TO REST A LITTLE. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
HEH
I'M NOT DRUNK--
I SHOULD ASK THEM TO CARRY ME BACK. ECK.
...
WHO IS THIS MAN? HOW COME I DIDN'T NOTICE HIM APPROACHING?
HMM,

MOONHOOK WE JUST RECEIVED A "BACK-UP" REQUEST FROM THE SOUTH-EASTERN REGION OF EARTH. THEY SENSE A LEVEL "A" HALL.
HMM- MUST I GO TOO?
?
ISN'T THAT A CLARUS FORCE FIELD?
SO WHAT? IT'S OVER ALREADY ARE THEY ALL DEAD? WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU WATCHING?
OHHH—
THAT GUY THERE. THE LAST ONE STANDING
THE POOR GUY IS COMPLETELY SURROUNDED CARE TO WAGER HOW LONG HE'LL LAST?
IF HE CAN KEEP HIS PACE UP, AT THAT RATE...
LET ME GUESS, YOU'RE JUST WATCHING TO SEE WHEN HE'LL FINALLY COLLAPSE?
ALL THE OTHER COMBATANTS WERE PULLED BACK A WHILE AGO, THEY DISPLAYED POOR COMBAT SKILLS. HOWEVER, THIS ONE SOLDIER SEEMS PRETTY RESILIENT
FOUR HOSTILES AT A TIME ARE THE MOST HE CAN HANDLE, SO HE'S NOT A TRULY SUPERIOR COMBATANT. HE MUST BE HANGING ON BY PURE WILL.

W ARNING
A DANGEROUS TORNADO HAS BEEN DETECTED. IF YOU NOTICE OBJECTS DISAPPEARING DO NOT ATTEMPT TO TOUCH THEM REPORT THE INCIDENT IMMEDIATELY
WOW
I CAME BECAUSE I WAS CURIOUS...
IT'S DIFFICULT TO LOOK AWAY

THE SIGHT OF A HALL USUALLY TERRIFIES ME
BEAUTIFUL
THEY LOOK SO POWERFUL THAT IT MAKES ME FORGET WHAT THEY TRULY ARE, AND

GASP
PEOPLE WERE ATTACKED AND HURT BECAUSE OF THIS HALL AND I'M JUST STARING AT IT WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?
WITH POWER LIKE THIS THEY COULD HAVE SEALED IT UP COMPLETELY
SHAE
WHY DID THEY JUST LEAVE IT LIKE THIS?
GRAB
WHAT THE..?!

"OH NO! THEY MARKED THIS HALL, SO THEY MUST'VE BEEN MONITORING IT."
WHAT THE HECK?
LET ME GO_!
GO!
WHOOSH
THWAP
UGH!
THUD
GRIP
LET_

...!!!
HUFF
WHAT...!
KUK
PBT
BT
BT
HALT

GUESS WHO~~
FREEEZE
OH, COME ON~
DROOP
FBT
WHAT? THE BARRICADE HAS BEEN LIFTED?
WHAT THE... WHY DOES YOUR PERVERSION GET UPGRADED EACH TIME WE MEET?
MY PERVERTED FRIEND
DDING

YOUR HAND...
ABOUT THE WAY I WORK...
YOU KNOW... YOU HAVEN'T YET REALIZED SOMETHING.
IF I'M GOING TO BE PERSECUTED FOR A CRIME ANYWAY... I MIGHT AS WELL RECEIVE SOMETHING TO MAKE IT WORTH MY WHILE.
SQUIRM
LICK
..!
..GASP!
..STOP IT! YOU PER..!
HUH?
LET GO OF ME!
UGH.
I.. I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME!
WILL YOU..!
THWAP
PRTOT
GETTING EXCITED?

HUFF
HUFF
YOU KEEP DOING PERVERTED THINGS EVERY TIME I SEE YOU. WHAT ELSE AM I SUPPOSED TO CALL YOU? THEN, YOU DO EVEN MORE PERVERTED THINGS
BECAUSE I CALL YOU A PERVERT AS A RESULT, YOU LOOK EVEN MORE PERVERTED!
MOONHOO
MOONHOO BAEK.

SIGH
OKAY MOONHOO. SINCE WE'VE MET MULTIPLE TIMES ALREADY LET'S JUST BE BLUNT AND HONEST
YOU'RE GAY, RIGHT?
...HUH?
LET ME SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT JUST BECAUSE I TURNED DOWN THAT GIRL EARLIER DOESN'T MEAN I LIKE GUYS.
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A BOY TOY, PLEASE SEARCH ELSEWHERE.
KYACK! I WAS REJECTED!
...
SHOCK--!
WAAAH~
TO REJECT...
A HOTTIE LIKE ME~
IF YOU'RE NOT YOU CAN JUST SAY SO!
BWAHAHAHA HAHAHAHA HAHAHAHA HAHAHA!
I...I WAS REJECTED... KEKEKEKEH... KEKEKEKEKEH...
KYA
KYA
FFF
...
BWAHAHAHAHA!
LOOK IT'S NOT COMPLETELY MY FAULT FOR MISUNDERSTANDING! IF YOU'RE NOT GAY WHY DO YOU KEEP DOING PERVERTED THINGS TO A GUY?!
ARRRRGH
OH...OKAY OKAY!
MY BAD I TOOK THINGS TOO FAR.
PSHAW
I LOVE YOUR REACTIONS. I COULDN'T RESTRAIN MYSELF
...I THOUGHT I WAS BEING KIDNAPPED
I WAS JUST SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
GUESS WHO-POTATO

GUESS WHO? TRUE, HE DID SAY THAT...
SO?
...CHAEUN.
?
I'M MOONHOO BAEK. AND YOU?
...AH.
CHAEUN SHIN.
CHAEUN SHIN
...
BEING PERVERTED ISN'T THE PROBLEM. MAYBE YOU'RE JUST NATURALLY A PLAYER.
I'M BLUSHING! SURRY FROM HIM SAYING MY NAME
OH, SO WHAT HAPPENED WITH YOUR SUPERIOR'S GIRLFRIEND?
UGH
...THAT PROBLEM ISN'T RESOLVED
YET I'M HIDING OUT IN ANOTHER TEAM...
HMM.
GRUMBLE
I'M STILL SCARED THOUGH. MAYBE I SHOULD JUST KEP OFF THE BAND-AID HE'S NOT THE TYPE, BUT, MAYBE HE'LL LET THINGS SLIDE. BUT, EVEN THAT THOUGHT UPSETS ME, TOO.
GRUMBLE
IS HIS SUPER OR THE SAME GUY? THE ONE
RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT MESS OF A BATTLE? WHERE THE ENTIRE TEAM WAS ANNIHILATED AND HE WAS THE ONLY ONE LEFT STANDING?
IF YOU'RE HIDING WHY NOT JUST STAY HIDDEN?

GRUNT
HOW COULD MY TRANSMITTER BREAK? IT'S DESIGNED TO SURVIVE BRUTAL FIGHTS.
GRAB
UGH!
TAP
?!
WHOOSH
WHAT...
FLINCH
GRAB
WH...
WHOA!
SQUEEZE
GROPE
PERVERT?!

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU DID ANYTHING WRONG.
WOULDN'T YOU PREFER NOT SEEING HIM OR RUNNING INTO HIM?
IT'S NOT THAT BIG A DEAL.
HAHA
I'M SURPRISED. I NEVER EXPECTED TO HEAR SOMEONE OUT IN THE FIELD ADVISE ME TO SWITCH TEAMS.
I GUESS YOU HEAR THAT OFTEN? I SUPPOSE THERE'S NO PROBLEM THEN.
JUST SWITCH.
NO...
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF LEAVING FOR GOOD.
...HMM.
SUCH LOYALTY TO YOUR SUPERIOR?
I GUESS THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HIM THAT MUST BE RESPECTABLE?
EVEN THOUGH HE HAS NO LEADERSHIP SKILLS...
HA
RESPECT?

...RESPECT
WHAT AN INAPPROPRIATE WORD
FBT
THAT MAN?
IT'S DEFINITELY NOT RESPECT
BUT I HAVE NO INTENTION OF LEAVING HIM.
I CAN'T ANSWER WHY...
AND HE STARED AT ME WITH A BLANK EXPRESSION.
...THEN WHAT IS IT?

CORE SCRAMBLE

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DAMN! I DIDN'T EXPECT A MASTER TO SHOW UP
THAT TOUGH LITTLE LADY JUMPED AROUND LIKE A BABY CALF ON SPEED
WE DIDN'T GET MUCH THIS TIME.
TADA TADA
THE HALLS THEMSELVES WERE LOW-LEVEL AND WE HAD PEOPLE GETTING IN OUR WAY
THEY STARTED BLOWING THINGS UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET!
IF CLARUS HAS DECIDED TO FIGHT US, THINGS CAN GET MESSY
THEY HAVE SIX MASTER LEVEL SOLDIERS.
THIS WOULD ALL GO SO MUCH EASIER IF YOU'D GET INVOLVED CAPTAIN
MOONHOO.
...MOONHOO ARE YOU LISTENING?

...I'M LISTENING.

YOU'RE BASICALLY CRYING OUCH OVER SOME LITTLE THING THOSE WEAKLINGS DID TO YOU.
YOU'RE TELLING ME A MASTER PLANNED AND ATTACKED,
NO! THEY COMPLETELY PLANNED AND COORDINATED AN ATTACK AGAINST US! YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN THAT WOMAN!
I DON'T NEED TO SEE ANYTHING. I'M SURE SHE BLEW THINGS UP TO MAKE IT LOOK ALL BIG AND IMPRESSIVE.
AND YET YOU ALL RETURNED SAFE AND UNHARMED?
...!
THEY WON'T ATTACK PEOPLE.
THEY MAY TRY TO SCARE YOU BECAUSE THEY'RE UPSET. BUT THEY'RE EVEN MORE SCARED TO BE CAUGHT USING THEIR POWERS ON PEOPLE.
THEY'RE JUST BARKING. THEY HAVE NO BITE. THEY JUST SCARED YOU A LITTLE, THAT'S ALL.

SO YOU WANT US TO FIGHT ASSUMING THEY WON'T HURT US?
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? YOU'VE FOUGHT OTHERS WITH ABILITIES BEFORE.
JUST BRING MORE PEOPLE WITH YOU NEXT TIME, LIKE YOU ALWAYS DO OUR GOAL IS SIMPLY TO MARK THE HALLS ANYWAY.
I CAN TAKE CARE OF A BUNCH OF THEM AS LONG AS THEY'RE NOT MASTERS!
TO GANG UP ON THEM MAKES ME LOOK SO...
IT MAKES YOU LOOK BAD TO GANG UP ON THEM SO YOU WANT ME TO GET INVOLVED?
YEAH, THAT'LL MAKE YOU LOOK BETTER, KIM TAEHOON.
"!!!
IF... IF I WIELDED MASTER LEVEL MAGIC I COULD BEAT ANYONE WITH MY SKILLS!
IF I HAD ENOUGH MAGIC I COULD HANDLE EVEN MASTERS...
BUT, YOU DON'T SO YOU'LL HAVE TO SETTLE FOR GANGING UP ON THEM
IS IT MY FAULT THAT YOU DON'T HAVE MASTER LEVEL MAGIC?
HEY. THAT'S ENOUGH.

...WE DON'T HAVE TO ACT THIS WAY.
?
HEY.
I HEARD YOU CAN CONVERT A CORE INTO MAGIC AND ABSORB IT.
I... I HEARD THE RUMOR, CAPTAIN.
HEH... WHO STARTED A RUMOR LIKE THAT?
NOT ONLY CAN YOU CONTROL A CORE, YOU AN CREATE A SEAL THAT NO ONE HAS EVER EVEN SEEN BEFORE.
ISN'T IT POSSIBLE?!

WELL, IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE...
YOUR POWERS ARE SO STRONG BECAUSE OF THE CORE, AREN'T THEY?
YOU'RE NOT LIMITED TO THE ABILITIES THAT YOU WERE BORN WITH LIKE THE REST OF US.
KRACK
WATCH YOURSELF...!
EEP
IF MY POWERS DERIVE FROM A CORE, ARE THEY STILL NOT MY ABILITIES?
UM... NO... I MEAN...
I SENSE THE CORE, I ACQUIRE THE CORE, AND I REFINE IT INTO ENERGY THEN I SELL IT
WHY MUST I, SOMEONE WHO CONTROLS AND MANIPULATES CORES, BE QUESTIONED ABOUT WHY I GET STRONGER AFTER USING A CORE? AND BY A SMALL-TIME PUNK WHO HELPS OUT WITH SMALL-TIME BATTLES. LOOK, YOU'RE ONLY HERE FOR ONE OF TWO REASONS... EITHER YOU ENJOY FIGHTING OR YOU WANT TO MAKE A LITTLE MONEY
NO... NO... I WASN'T QUESTIONING YOU, CAPTAIN

I... I JUST WANT TO GROW STRONGER!
USING A CORE?
YES EXACTLY!
IF WE SUCCEED IN ACQUIRING A CORE,
MAKE MY MAGIC STRONGER INSTEAD OF PAYING ME MY SHARE!
RUMBLE
MAKE YOUR MAGIC STRONGER...?
IS THAT POSSIBLE?
PLOP

DON'T TOUCH ME!
WOOSH
REEL
?
?
KEKEKEH
SO YOU'RE ABLE TO STAND,
AND NOTHING LOOKS BROKEN.
GASP
?
HERE.
I HAVE WATER. AREN'T YOU THIRSTY?

...IT'LL BE HARD
WHY?!
I'M SURE YOU CAN.
I'M NOT SAYING IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
THE TASK MAY BE DOABLE IF YOU WERE A PERSON WITH THE ABILITY TO CONTROL THE CORE ITSELF... BUT IT WILL CONSUME
A LOT OF THE CORE'S ENERGY FOR THE USER TO INCREASE SOMEONE ELSE'S MAGIC.
IT WOULD LIKELY EXHAUST AN ENTIRE CORE JUST FOR ONE PERSON.
IF I USE UP AN ENTIRE CORE ON YOU WHAT ABOUT EVERYONE ELSE WHO NEEDS TO BE PAID THEIR SHARE?
YOUR CUT IS NOWHERE NEAR SUFFICIENT TO COMPENSATE THE OTHERS.
PREPOSTEROUS? YOU DO KNOW HOW MUCH A CORE COSTS, RIGHT?
PLUS IM GOING TO CHARGE FOR THE PROCEDURE, TOO. THE OPERATION WOULD TAKE SOOO LONG.
I'LL TAKE OUT A LOAN IF I HAVE TO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!
THEN.. FINE! I'LL BUY THE CORE!

CA... CAPTAIN!
CAN I DO THAT, TOO?
I CAN PAY FOR THE CORE AND THE PROCEDURE!
WHAT?! STAY OUT OF MY WAY!
HOW ABOUT THIS? LET'S MAKE THE DECISION BASED ON PERFORMANCE. WHOEVER EARNS THE HIGHEST NUMBERS GETS TO USE THE CORE!
QUIBBLE
WHAT? WHY?! IT WAS MY IDEA!
QUABBLE
WHAT? I GUESS YOU DON'T THINK YOU CAN BEAT ME ON PERFORMANCE?
#%@$!!
WHAT THE...
DON'T TELL ME... YOU BOTH WANT TO ATTEMPT AN INCREASE IN YOUR POWERS USING THE CORE?
EVEN IF THAT CORE COSTS YOU SEVERAL MILLION?
HECK YEAH!
YES SIR!

YOU PUNKS, TOO?
HAHA..?
OKAY. OKAY I LIKE ALL THIS AMBITION.
LET'S DO THIS THEN!
STOMP
THE NEXT CORE GOES TO THE PERSON WITH THE HIGHEST PERFORMANCE.
THE OTHERS DON'T GET A DIME.

THE AWARD IS AN INCREASE IN MAGIC USING AN ENTIRE CORE.
I'LL DO THE PROCEDURE FOR FREE, TOO.
...!!!
OOOWWAAAAHH!!!
VVHUM
PUMP
THUMP
KY.AAAH--!!!
LET'S HAVE SOME FUN.

LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE IN A BETTER MOOD NOW
YOU SEEMED UNUSUALLY DOWN TODAY
REALLY? I DID?
DIDN'T SOMETHING HAPPEN OUTSIDE OF TAEHOON WHEN YOU WERE ATTACKED?
SOMETHING THAT WAS BOTHERING YOU?
-AH!
HAHA, WAS I THAT OBVIOUS?
NO-NO, NOTHING'S WRONG DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
SOMETHING LIKE I GOT REJECTED BY A GIRL I WAS TRYING TO GET?
I WAS REJECTED YUP -KEKEKEH
C'MON— TELL ME.
NOTHING MUCH. SOMETHING PERSONAL.
OKAY YOU'RE TWISTING YOUR WORDS AROUND AGAIN, AREN'T YOU?

HUH? I WAS BEING VERY STRAIGHT-FORWARD
REGARDLESS, IT'S NOTHING AS PATHETIC AS WHAT I ASSUMED, RIGHT?
THIS IS A BAD HABIT OF YOURS. YOU KNOW WHEN OTHERS MISUNDERSTAND SOMETHING AND YET YOU NEVER CLEAR THINGS UP FOR THEM.
YOU NEVER INCREASED YOUR MAGIC USING A CORE, DID YOU?
WELL, EVEN IF I HAD, IT'S NONE OF THEIR BUSINESS, IS IT?
I NEVER LIED IT IS POSSIBLE.
YEAH... THAT'S SO YOU
YOU'RE GONNA GET YOURSELF HURT ONE OF THESE DAYS.
PROUD

BECAUSE OF THE UNPRECEDENTED RATE OF HALL OUTBREAKS LATELY THE TEAMS HAVE BEEN KEPT EXTRA BUSY
ADDITIONALLY COMBATANTS CONTINUE GETTING INJURED FROM COLLIDING WITH FOREIGN POWERS
THE RETURN DATE OF TEAM 4'S ROSTER IS ALSO BEING SIGNIFICANTLY DELAYED.
Team 4 GAYOON
I HAVE FULLY INTEGRATED WITH TEAM 2
THEY HAVE BECOME LIKE A FAMILY WITH CHIEF LEE GEUMPYO HOLDING THE CENTER I FEEL SO COMFORTABLE WITH THEM LIKE I COULD MELT RIGHT IN
TWO WEEKS HAVE PASSED...
SINCE I BEGAN AVOIDING CHIEF GAYOON.

I'M SCARED...
I'M STILL SCARED...
BRR BRR BRR BRR BRR BRR BRR BRR
NO! I THINK THE LONGER I GO WITHOUT SEEING HIM, THE MORE FRIGHTENED I FEEL.
MAYBE WE CAN AVOID...THIS G.F. FIASCO ENTIRELY?
CONSIDERING HE HASN'T GOTTEN AN GRYYEP OR HUNTED ME DOWN, IT'S A POSSIBILITY.
...BUT EVEN SO,
HE PROBABLY HAS REALIZED BY NOW THAT I'VE BEEN AVOIDING HIM.
...NO. NO. HE MAY NOT THINK THAT FAR.
HE DOESN'T COME TO THE TEAM LOUNGE SIMPLY BECAUSE WE HAVE NO MISSIONS SO NOT SEEING ME IS
...HE MAY HAVE EVEN COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN THAT I WAS ON HIS TEAM AT ALL?
DROOP
YIKES

HOW... HOW LONG WERE YOU WATCHING ME?
HUH? OH, JUST. YOU LOOKED LIKE YOU HAD A LOT ON YOUR MIND
YOU DO THAT EVERY SO OFTEN
AH, HAHA
THEY FAGED YOU. YOU DIDN'T HEAR IT, DID YOU?
HUH? OH, REALLY?
GO ON. I THINK IT HAS TO DO WITH THE FUTURE OF TEAM 4
OH... AM I BACK...
THE TIME HAS FINALLY COME
YOU SHOULD JUST STAY IN TEAM 2.
HAHA
BUT THEN AGAIN, I GUESS THERE'S NO POINT. SINCE THE CHIEF HAS FAILED AFTER TRYING SO HARD TO CONVINCE YOU.
ONCE THEY SEND YOU BACK, LET'S HAVE A FAREWELL PARTY
TAP
HAHAHA WELL, JUST SEE EACH OTHER AROUND! AND WE MAY EVEN BE CALLED TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER.
KEKEKEKEH
THEN, WE'LL THROW ANOTHER WELCOMING PARTY!
YOU JUST WANT A REASON TO GO OUT. DON'T YOU?
KEKEKEKEH

BACK TO TEAM 4
OKAY LET'S THINK POSITIVELY!
I LEARNED A LOT FROM TEAM 2.
GEUMPYO LEADS HIS PEOPLE EFFECTIVELY ACCORDING TO A PRECISE BATTLE PLAN.
THERE'S NO POINT FOR ME TO IMPROVE MY SKILLS WHEN ACTING ALONE.
I'VE ALWAYS DONE WHATEVER IT TOOK TO SURVIVE, BUT IF I PLANNED A STRATEGY AND ACTED EFFECTIVELY
I THINK I COULD OBTAIN GREAT RESULTS WITH JUST A TEAM FULL OF MID- AND LOW LEVEL COMBATANTS.
I SHOULD BE ABLE TO CREATE SOME SORT OF CAMARADERIE.
CHIEF GAYDON WOULD NEVER GET INVOLVED SO WE COULD NEVER TRULY BECOME LIKE TEAM 2...
BUT IF I'M AGGRESSIVE ABOUT IT.
IF THEY REVIVE OUR TEAM OR GIVE ME NEW TEAMMATES.
I WANT TO BUILD STRONG TEAMS!

...
KOFF
?
REEL
MAYBE HE'S NOT A PERVERT?
FORGET BEING THIRSTY! WHO EXACTLY IS THIS GUY...
YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE ENOUGH STRENGTH TO OPEN A TINY LITTLE BOTTLE?
CRICK
THERE, THERE.
GLUCK
GLUCK
UGH!
FUAH. WHAT THE HELL ARE Y...?!

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK? IT'S NOT BAD FOR YOU EITHER.
LIKE I SAID BEFORE, I DON'T CARE EITHER WAY.
TEAM Z'S CHIEF HOLDS CHAEUN SHIN IN VERY HIGH REGARDS.
HE'S IN YOUR TEAM YOU'VE WORKED TOGETHER FOR SO LONG, SO YOU SHOULD KNOW HIM BETTER.
HMPH
WHAT? I DON'T WORK WITH GUYS. THAT'S JUST GROSS AND ANNOYING.
BUT...
OKAY, WE'RE IN AGREEMENT
I'LL SPEAK WITH CHAEUN SHIN SEPARATELY.
GEUMPYO WILL HAVE A FIT OVER CHAEUN SHIN. THAT SHOULD BE FUN TO WATCH.
I DON'T CARE.
HA

.....
...WHAT?
AFTER CONSIDERING MANY OPTIONS IN LIGHT OF GAYOON'S SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS...
WE HAVE DECIDED THAT TEAM 4 WILL NO LONGER INCLUDE OTHER SOLDIERS.

THE ENTIRE UNIT WILL NOW ONLY COMPRISE OF GAYOON AND YOU, CHAEUN SHIN.
YOU WILL BE A TWO-MAN TEAM FROM NOW ON.
REEL
THIS WILL BE AN UNUSUALLY SMALL ARRANGEMENT BUT...
GAYOON IS OUR HIGHEST-RANKED COMBATANT. AND WE HEARD THAT YOU'RE A VERY SKILLFUL MID-LEVEL COMBATANT

I HEAR TEAM 4 HAS PERFORMED WITH AS LITTLE AS FIVE MEN? THEREFORE, THERE SHOULD BE NO DISADVANTAGE TO TEAM 4 WORKING WITH JUST TWO MEMBERS.
OF COURSE, SUCH A SMALL TEAM WILL NATURALLY BE ASSIGNED DIFFERENT MISSIONS THAN LARGER TEAMS.
WAIT.. WAIT!
PLEASE RECONSIDER SIR?!
L.. I'M NOT READY...!
I MEAN, I DON'T THINK I CAN ASSIST THE CHIEF ON MY OWN.
YOU OBJECT?
YOU HAVE FOUGHT IN TEAM 4 FOR QUITE A WHILE, HAVE YOU NOT?
YOU'VE NEVER BEEN SERIOUSLY INJURED NOR REQUESTED A TRANSFER.

WE INTERPRETED THAT TO MEAN YOU UNDERSTAND GAYOON'S WAYS AND MUST HAVE ADAPTED ACCORDINGLY
TH.. THAT'S NOT TRUE!
I ALWAYS BARELY MAKE IT OUT ALIVE..!
DON'T YOU THINK CHIEF GAYOON'S METHODS ARE A LITTLE.. HARSH?
IT'S ONE THING WITH A GROUP, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN HANDLE HIS TEMPER BY MYSELF..
SO, YOU'RE REJECTING THE FORMATION OF A TWO MEMBER TEAM?
REGARDLESS, THERE WON'T BE ANYONE IN TEAM 4.
WOULD YOU LIKE A TRANSFER TO ANOTHER TEAM? I KNOW TEAM 2 WANTS YOU.
SO. THE ONLY WAY TO STAY ON TEAM 4... IS TO PAIR OFF WITH CHIEF GAYOON?
WELL, THAT'S THE SITUATION RIGHT NOW

HMM... I HEARD YOU KEPT REFUSING TO TRANSFER. I NATURALLY ASSUMED YOU LIKED WORKING WITH GAYOON.
WERE YOU NOT STAYING IN TEAM 4 BECAUSE OF GAYOON?
EH.. UH... THAT'S TRUE, BUT...
BEING ALONE WITH HIM IS A BIT
AND I WAS SURPRISED AT HOW QUICKLY GAYOON AGREED SO I THOUGHT THE TWO OF YOU GOT ALONG THIS ENTIRE TIME.
...WHAT?
UH... THEN...
IF THIS IDEA GETS SCRAPPED...
CHIEF GAYOON WILL KNOW THAT I REJECTED THE PROPOSAL...?
SURE, I GUESS SO.
CURDLE
NO NEED TO LOOK SO SCARED
OH.

GAYOON, WHEN DID YOU GET HERE?
CUROLE
CREEEEEAAAAP
HELP... HELP ME...

CORE SCRAMBLE

VOL. 1 CH. 7

KTHUMP
WHUMP
BUMP
THUMP
BAPP
THUD
KHUKK...
HUFF

SAY AGAIN?
I'M WHAT?

KOFF!
KEKEKEH
KOFF!
KOFF!
GULP
THUD
...!

YOU LITTLE RAT...
CHUDD
YOU TAG ALONG AND ANNOY ME, BUT THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN SAYING BEHIND MY BACK?
CHUDD
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR PLACE BECAUSE THAT IDIOT GEUMPYO SPOILED YOU?
CHUDD
IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, JUST SAY IT...
GRIP
UGH...
TO MY FACE.

I'M...
SORRY...
THUMP
HA
I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T WANT TO WORK WITH ME?
KHUKK
KHUKK
THAT... WASN'T...

FUCK. I ONLY SAID YES BECAUSE GEUMPYO KEPT ANNOYING ME. HOW DARE YOU LITTLE PUNK..?!
BAPP
...
WHY DON'T YOU REQUEST A TRANSFER? WHO'S STOPPING YOU?
DO IT! GEUMPYO WILL BE JUMPING FOR JOY.
KOFF
L L
NEVER EVEN...
CONSIDERED TRANSFERRING...
HONEST
CHIEF... GAYOON...

PLOP
SLIDE
STOMP

IF YOU MOUTH OFF AGAIN, I'LL KILL YOU.

THOONK

SLAM
HE HAS NO RIGHT TO LEAD ANYONE!
YOU'RE THE ONE THAT SAID CHAEJIN SHIN IS A GREAT COMBATANT
HE OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD BE ABLE TO WORK WITH GAYOON.
NO WAY!
HE BECAME SO SKILLFUL BECAUSE HE NEEDED TO SURVIVE THAT PUNK'S INCOMPETENCE!
IF YOU'RE GOING TO DOWNSIZE HIS TEAM, JUST HAVE HIM WORK SOLO!
I AGREE THAT GAYOON LACKS ADEQUATE ABILITIES TO LEAD A LARGE TEAM.
BUT IT'S ALSO TRUE THAT GAYOON FORCED CHAEJIN SHIN TO ADVANCE TO THE EXTENT THAT HE HAS.
IT MEANS THEY MUST WORK WELL TOGETHER TO SOME DEGREE. I DON'T THINK IT WOULD HURT TO SEE HOW THE ARRANGEMENT GOES.
...
SMIRK

WHAT ARE YOU SCHEMING?
PHEW
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? YOU WERE RIGHT. SO I'M NOT GETTING MY TEAM BACK.
BUT YOU HATE HAVING SOMEONE FOLLOW YOU AROUND!
WOULDN'T YOU PREFER TO WORK ALONE RATHER THAN IN A PAIR?!
KEKEKEH
WELL, TRUE ENOUGH.
BUT...
AS ANNOYING AS HE IS, CHAEUN ACTS QUICKLY AND CAN BE PRETTY USEFUL TO HAVE AROUND.
YOU KEPT BRAGGING CHAEUN SHIN THIS, CHAEUN SHIN THAT... IT ALL MADE ME TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT HIM.
I THOUGHT MAYBE I SHOULD GIVE HIM ANOTHER SHOT.
HE STILL REMAINS IN MY TEAM AFTER ALL. THERE'S NO REASON TO PUSH HIM OUT IF HE DOESN'T WANT TO LEAVE.
I WANT TO SEE WHY YOU'RE SO INTO HIM.
.....

HEY, IF YOU'RE GOING TO FIGHT, TAKE IT OUTSIDE.
BEEP
BEEP
PZKT
WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY SIR!
WHAT IS IT?
AN INCIDENT OCCURRED WITH TEAM 5 WHILE THEY WERE OUT CLEARING A BUG
THEY ENTERED INTO CONFRONTATION WITH A CORE HUNTER GROUP. AND...
ONE OF OUR SOLDIERS HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED!
KIDNAPPED?! WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
WE DONT KNOW THE DETAILS YET THEY ATTACKED FROM BEHIND AND CAUGHT THE TEAM OFF-GUARD

THEY GRABBED HIM
AND TELEPORTED OUT
TAHT
WHERE DID THEY TELEPORT TO?
SIR?
THE KIDNAPPED SOLDIER'S HOOK MIGHT BE TRANSMITTING DATA BACK!
OH. I'LL ATTEMPT TO TRACK HIM
TAK TAK TAK
...THERE'S TOO MUCH INTERFERENCE.
WE CAN'T LOCATE HIM
INTERFERENCE?
THEY JAMMED THE HOOK LINE?
UMM... THEY MUST KNOW ABOUT OUR HOOKS.
WHAT ARE THEY PLANNING TO DO? DO THEY REALLY INTEND TO FIGHT C.O?
THE DISTANCE OF TELEPORTATION VARIES ACCORDING TO THE TELEPORT SKILLS OF THE KIDNAPPER...
WE MUST BEGIN AN INVESTIGATION IMMEDIATELY

WHAT'S THE STATUS OF TEAM 5?
THE BASTARDS ALL DISAPPEARED AFTER TAKING THE SOLDIER TEAM 5 COULDN'T FOLLOW THEM. THEY'RE AWAITING FURTHER
INSTRUCTIONS. WE STILL DON'T KNOW THEIR OBJECTIVE, AND THEY'RE HURTING OUR BUG CLEARING MISSION
I WANT TEAM 2 TO GO TAKE A LOOK.
HELP TEAM 5'S BUG CLEARING MISSION. FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON AND THEN PROCEED WITH THE INVESTIGATION.
YES, SIR.
...

STOMP
STOMP
SLAM
I
YOU...
CHIEF LEE.

THANKS FOR PUTTING ON A GOOD SHOW, KID
GASP
...?
FBT
GRIP
KEH KEH KEH

WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO YOU?
AH. HAHA...
RAGGED
THOSE AREN'T BUG INJURIES.
THEY LOOK LIKE FIGHTING WOUNDS.
WHOOSH
DID YOU COME TO REQUEST A TRANSFER?

UH...
OH. NO... I...
WAS TOLD THAT...
I HAVE A MISSION ASSIGNMENT
SMIRK

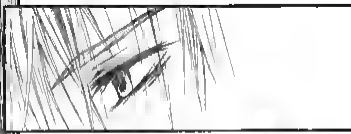
WHAT...
THWAP
LET'S TALK LATER.
TAK
TAK
TAK
CHAEUN SHIN YOU JUST SAID YOU'RE NOT HERE TO REQUEST A TRANSFER?
DOES THAT MEAN YOU'LL WORK AS A PAIR WITH GAYOON?

YES, SIR.

THE RESTRUCTURED TEAM 4 MUST MONITOR THE SEALED HALLS.
CLARUS DOESN'T DESTROY ALL HALLS BECAUSE...
HALLS RARELY MANIFEST AROUND EACH OTHER NOT EVEN AROUND CLOSED ONES WE DON'T WANT NEW ONES POPPING UP WHERE WE DESTROY OLD ONES
THEY'VE BECOME UNSTABLE. A SEALED HALL OF 10 YEARS COULD GO FROM INACTIVE TO ACTIVE OVERNIGHT
TEAM 4 MUST ANALYZE EACH REACTIVATED HALL AND DECIDE WHETHER TO RESEAL OR DESTROY IT COMPLETELY
OTHERWISE, TEAM 4 WILL EITHER BACK UP OTHER TEAMS OR HANDLE SMALL BUGS

COME TO THINK OF IT...
IT SEEMS STRANGE THAT I NEVER QUESTIONED MYSELF...
JUST WHY DO I STAY WITH HIM?
DESPITE EVERYONE ELSE'S OPINION ABOUT HOW STRANGE WE ARE,
SOMEWHERE DEEP INSIDE, OUR PAIRING FEELS ONLY NATURAL.
YOU'RE SUCH AN ODDBALL.
YOU POOR THING.
JUST COME TO MY TEAM.
ARE YOU HERE TO REQUEST A TRANSFER?
WHY...?
CAN'T YOU JUST SWITCH?

IF IT'S NOT RESPECT
WHAT IS IT I FEEL?



JUST WHUNT...
DOES THIS FEELING
COME FROM?

SHRRRRP
FWOOSH

RUMBLE
AHA. SO THIS IS THE UNIQUE CODE.
IF WE SPREAD OUT IN AN AREA AND TAKE EVERYONE INSIDE...
RUMBLE
WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?
OH CAPTAIN
HEHEHEH.
WE THOUGHT OF SOMETHING FUN.
HEY... YOU KNOW THOSE C.O. PUNKS HAVE A LEASH THAT SENDS BACK CRUCIAL DATA ABOUT THEMSELVES, RIGHT?
THEN, WHY DID YOU BRING HIM ALL THE WAY HERE?
OH, DON'T WORRY! I BLOCKED THE SIGNAL WITH A FORCE FIELD.
WE'LL LET HIM GO UNHARMED, AS SOON AS WE'RE DONE.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE SCHEMING SOMETHING.
KEKEKEKE
JUST WAIT. EVEN YOU WILL BE SHOCKED.
I WISH I COULD SEE THEM FREAK OUT OVER THIS.
SNICKER

YOU'RE ALL WORKING PRETTY HARD
THIS CORE HUNT IS BECOMING A LITTLE FESTIVAL.
TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK
TAK TAK TAK
NOTHING SPECIAL, RIGHT?
TAK TAK TAK TAK
NOPE. THE MARKED HALLS ARE EVOLVING NICELY
OH, AND A COUPLE HALLS THAT CLARUS SEALED HAVE REOPENED.
I THINK CLARUS IS SENDING SOMEONE WITH THE ABILITY TO DESTROY THE HALLS COMPLETELY
IS THAT CLARUS' SPECIAL ABILITY?
WELL... HE'S NOT VERY AGGRESSIVE, RIGHT?
NO. OH! THERE HE IS NOW.
TAK TAK TAK
LET'S SEE WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE.

Faex
BUGS ARE A DIMENSIONAL OUTBREAK. THEY'RE BEINGS THAT CONTAMINATE OUR WORLD
MANY ORGANIZATIONS EXIST FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF EXTERMINATING THESE BUGS. EACH ONE HAS PERFECTED THEIR OWN METHODS.
THEY'RE MONSTERS. A TYPE OF VIRUS BELIEVED TO ORIGINATE FROM A DIMENSIONAL PASSAGEWAY CALLED A "HALL"
HOWEVER IN EVERY ORGANIZATION ALL COMBATANTS WHO FIGHT THE BUGS DIRECTLY...
Caenum
Hall
USE EITHER SPELLS,
OR WEAPONS ENCHANTED BY A SPELL.
CLARUS ORBIS (HEREAFTER KNOWN AS C.O.) USES CIRCULAR MAGIC. THEY COMPRISE THE LARGEST FIGHTING GROUP IN EXISTENCE. TO PREVENT CASUALTIES, THEY USE A BOOT OUT SYSTEM DURING BATTLE.
BOOT OUT SYSTEM
EVERY COMBATANT WITHIN C.O. WEARS A HOOK ON THEIR BODY. EACH ONE WITH A UNIQUE CODE TO IDENTIFY INDIVIDUALS
ho ker
THE HOOK MONITORS EACH SOLDIER'S PHYSICAL CONDITION. IF THE WEARER SUFFERS EXCESSIVE DAMAGE, THE HOOK IMMEDIATELY TELEPORTS HIM BACK TO THE BASE.
CLARUS ORBIS
SO, BEING BOOTED OUT SO URGENTLY MEANS...

I HEAR THAT THEIR DESTROYER GUY IS ALSO THEIR HIGHEST-RANKED MASTERS
TAK TAK TAK
THEIR HIERARCHY RANGES FROM GENERAL MAGIC TO RANK 8 LEADERS.
MUMBLE
...IS THAT HIM?
HUH? YES. THE ONE WITH THE TATTOO
THE ONE IN UNIFORM IS A NORMAL SOLDIER.
...
?
...WHAT'S WITH HIS EXPRESSION?
...HUH?

CORE SCRAMBLE

VOL. 1 CH. 8

WHEN I WAS YOUNG...
THE HORROR OF SEEING MY FIRST HALL SCARRED MY MIND
I WATCHED OBJECTS AND SMALL ANIMALS GET EATEN UP BY IT
SEEING THE SEVERED REMAINS OF THE ANIMALS TRAUMATIZED ME
THAT EERIE FEELING FORGET GOING CLOSER. I COULDN'T EVEN LOOK AT IT
NO ONE ELSE COULD EVEN SEE IT. ONLY I DID
THEN, A LARGE HALL MANIFESTED NEAR MY HOME. I FREAKED OUT
RIGHT THEN...

HE APPEARED
THAT'S WHEN HE BECAME...
LODGED RIGHT HERE INSIDE ME.
SOMEONE ONCE ASKED ME... IF WHAT I FELT WAS RESPECT
...GEUMPYO. YOU'RE A PERSON THAT I RESPECT.
I'LL ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL TO YOU... YOU'RE A GREAT MAN THAT I'LL ALWAYS TRUST AND RESPECT.
I DON'T FOLLOW HIM... BECAUSE I RESPECT HIM.
I DON'T FEEL ALLEGIANCE AS YOU MIGHT THINK, NOR IS IT LOYALTY
THE REASON I STAY WITH HIM IS...

BECAUSE HE ALONE POSSESSES THE POWER TO DESTROY HALLS.
I DON'T CARE THAT HE ACTS IRRESPONSIBLE, OR THAT HE'S A PLAYER, OR THAT HE DISRESPECTS ME.
...I'M SORRY, GEUMPYO. THIS IS WHO I AM.
YOU DON'T NEED TO PROTECT ME. I'M NOT SOMEONE WHO GETS ABUSED JUST BECAUSE I'M TOO NICE.
I'M SORRY FOR DISAPPOINTING YOU...
I...

YES, I FOLLOW HIM BECAUSE I'M TERRIFIED. I DESPISE THE BEINGS FROM THE OTHER DIMENSION.
ALTHOUGH I FINALLY FIGURED MYSELF OUT, I DON'T INTEND TO CHANGE MY MIND
AS LONG AS HE OWNS THAT ABILITY, I CONTINUED ANYTHING ELSE FROM HIM.
BUT...
PERHAPS I'VE WATCHED HIM FOR TOO LONG.
...THAT IS WHY I FOLLOW THE ONE WHO CAN DESTROY THEM COMPLETELY.
THE SIGHT OF HIM STILL...
HMPH.
YIKES
OH...CHIEF...
WHY ARE YOU HERE...?
WHAT? ARE YOU RENTING THIS PLACE OR SOMETHING? I NEED TO TAKE SHOWERS, TOO.
HE NEVER COMES HERE!

FBT
WHAT? WHY ARE YOU SO NERVOUS?
YOU'RE ACTING LIKE A GIRL.
?
?
YOU'RE A GUY WITH NOTHING TO LOOK AT
UM...
IT'S BECAUSE YOU KEEP LOOKING IN...
YOU'RE CROSSING INTO MY SHOWER STALL
HA
YOU'RE COVERED IN GOOSEBUMPS WHAT A SIGHT
YOU...
YOU'RE THE ONE GIVING ME THESE BUMPS!
KYAACK
WHY ARE YOU COVERING YOURSELF?
—?

WHY ARE YOU COVERING THAT?
GRIN
IS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULDN'T SEE?
SMIRK
HUH?!
?!
OH. NOTHING. THERE ISN'T MUCH TO SEE...
HNNNG.
CREEAAK...
?!
IT'S NOT UP OR ANYTHING?
OF.. OF COURSE NOT..
CH.. CHIEF?!

THEN WHY ARE YOU COVERING IT? WE'RE BOTH GUYS.
LET ME SEE IT.
WAIT...
UH...
.....
.....

WHAP
!
UGH. WHAT A WASTE OF TIME.
CREEAAK
TAP
THMP
THMP
HEY
?!
WHO... WHO... WHO TOLD YOU... TO LOOK!
YOU FORCED ME.. HE'S THE ONE WHO FORCED ME.
MAYBE I'M JUST A TOY TO HIM...
UGH MAN

THE COMBATANT CAN NO LONGER FIGHT DESPITE THIS EMERGENCY PROCEDURE. MANY COMBATANTS STILL SUFFER PARALYSIS OR EVEN DEATH FROM THEIR WOUNDS
GASP
CHAEUN SHIN! YOU'RE ALIVE?!
I'M DEAD..
THAT GUY WAS A PERVERT AFTER ALL
YOUR ENTIRE TEAM BOOTED BACK EXCEPT FOR YOU. I THOUGHT YOUR HOOK BROKE AND YOU DIED AT THE SITE!
IS YOUR HOOK OPERATIONAL?
RIIIP
GAG
IT'S FINE! AS IF YOU COULD TELL JUST BY LOOKING!
FLOP
SQUEEZE
WHAT'S WITH YOU? I WAS WORRIED STOP GIVING ME ATTITUDE!
AIEE!
YOU'RE STRANGLING ME!
HE LOOKS LIKE HE'LL SURVIVE.

THE KIDNAPPED COMBATANT WAS FOUND FIVE HOURS AFTER THE KIDNAPPING WITHOUT ANY INJURIES.
HIS SENSES WERE BLOCKED DURING THE KIDNAPPING. HE CAN'T REMEMBER WHERE HE WAS TAKEN OR WHAT HAPPENED.
SINCE THE GROUP KEPT INTERFERING WITH CLARUS AND BECAUSE THEIR INTENTIONS WERE UNKNOWN, THE COMBATANTS GREW MORE AND MORE UNEASY.
KRROOARRR
GROUP 2, FORMATION C! DON'T LIFT THE SIEGE!
AAAAACK!

DON'T GET TOO CLOSE!
IT'S A CORROSIVE POISON!
ERAA
IT'S SPLITTING UP!
WHERE'S OUR BACK UP?
I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THEY'RE ALMOST HERE, SIR!
TSK, TSK...
THEY'RE JUST MAKING IT HARDER ON THEMSELVES.
THAT MASTER ISN'T VERY SKILLED
BUT ANYWAYS...
I'M GLAD IT'S EVOLVING NICELY, BUT AT THIS RATE, LEVEL "A" BUGS WILL START COMING OUT
THERE'S A LOT OF WORK TO BE DONE.
THE WAVE LENGTH OF THE MAGIC AND THE THRESHOLD OF THE BUG OUTBREAK MUST BE
MUMBLE
MUMBLE SEPARATED. SET A STANDARD AND CLOSE
BACK UP HAS ARRIVED!

WE'RE HERE TO BACK UP TEAM 3!
WE'RE TEAM 4.
WHAT?!
TEAM 4? WHERE'S THE REST OF YOU?
OH, TEAM 4 ONLY HAS TWO ACTIVE MEMBERS.
THE TWO OF YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE OUR BACK UP?!
WHY TEAM 4 OF ALL TEAMS?
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?!
HEY. CALL HEADQUARTERS AND ASK IF ANYONE ELSE IS AVAILABLE TO BACK US UP.
THWAP
KLAGKT

STOP IT!
HOLD THE LINE!
THMP
THMP
HEADQUARTERS! HEADQUARTERS!
KCHIKT
CLANGG

THOOOOONG

SPATTER
..I WAS EXPECTING SOMETHING STRONG BECAUSE YOU WERE FREAKING OUT SO MUCH.
YOU ARE SO PATHETIC.
SMIRK
WOOMPH
SHRRRP
...
THMP
THMP

AACK!
CHUAAK
DON'T... LET YOUR GUARD DOWN! DON'T FORGET THE PART THAT SPLIT OUT!
TOSS
CH.. CHIEF! WHERE ARE YOU...
EH. THIS IS TOO ANNOYING
THE BUG...
I GOT RID OF MORE THAN HALF. YOU GUYS CAN HANDLE THE REST.
I'M GOING HOME.
CHIEF...
...!

HEY! IF YOU'RE GONNA LEAVE ALSO THEN GET OUT OF OUR WAY!
!
NO SIR, SORRY SIR!
WHY..
CLARUS ORNIS
WHY IS HE..

ATTACK FROM THE OTHER SIDE!
ROGER!
TA DA DA
SCREECH
?!
DIDN'T TAKE HIM LONG TO NOTICE ME?
FERY... I MEAN, MOONHOO.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
TA DA
OH, NOTHING
I WAS JUST PASSING BY...
GRIP
WHATEVER. YOU HAVE TO LEAVE!

SQUEEZE
PSTBT
WHEW
WE SHOULD BE FAR ENOUGH FROM THE FORCE FIELD NOW...
DON'T GO NEAR THAT PLACE, OKAY?
I'M WORKING NOW SO I HAVE TO GO.

DIDN'T YOUR CHIEF ACCOMPANY YOUR MEN TO THE SITE? I HEARD THE BATTLE WAS A MESS BECAUSE OF A LEVEL "8" EXPLOSION.
SURE, HE DID BUT THANKS TO EVERYONE BOOTING OUT.
I HAD TO FINISH OFF THE FAREX BUGS MYSELF. THEY KEPT ON COMING.
WHA...
HUH? YOU STAYED BEHIND ALL BY YOURSELF AND COMPLETED THE MISSION?
THE FAREX ARE LOW-LEVEL BUGS. I BARELY LIVED
YOU ROCK! THE ATTACK MUST'VE LOOKED LIKE AN INCOMING SWARM OF BEES!
REALLY?!
WOW--
IT'S NOT JUST A MATTER OF SKILL BUT WILLPOWER.
EVEN A LEVEL 6 LEADER COULDN'T HAVE ACCOMPLISHED WHAT YOU DID
YOU'RE LIKE A LOW-LEVEL GOD OF GAMING.
PAT
YOU'RE COMPLIMENTING ME?
WHOA-- HOW DID SOMEONE SO SKILLED END UP SERVING IN THAT FUNK GAYOON'S TEAM?
THAT JERK.
I HEARD HE SKIPPED OUT AT THE VERY START OF THE FIGHTING.
SQUIRM
UH-OH. THERE'S A DARK AURA SURROUNDING HIM.
GEUMPYO... MINSUK...

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?
BLINK
...
YOU HAVE A LOT OF INJURIES. WERE YOU BEAT UP?
TSK
DID HE BEAT YOU UP AFTER ALL?
THAT SUPERIOR OF YOURS.
HOW...
GRAB
HOW COULD HE...!

HOW COULD HE JUST WALK AWAY SO EASILY LIKE THAT?!
ALTHOUGH HE WIELDS SUCH GREAT POWER!
IF I..
IF HE WANTED TO, HE COULD DESTROY THEM ALL..!
IF I HAD THAT POWER...

LICK

HUFF

HAA...
SMOOCH
SMOOCH
...
WHAM
PBT
...I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T GAY...
ARE YOU AFRAID I'LL TURN YOU?

SMOOCH
...SORRY FOR WHINING LIKE A KID
KEKEKEH
ANYTIME. I COMPLETELY WELCOME IT
KEKEKEH
AND WHAT WEIRD THINGS WILL YOU DO THEN?
KEKEKEKEH
TA DA DA
THIS PLACE IS DANGEROUS HERE. GET OUTTA HERE.

YOU GOTTA HEAR THIS
HE CALLS HIMSELF A CHIEF BUT NOT ONLY DOES HE TALK TO HIS GIRLFRIEND IN THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLE, BUT HE STOPS ME FROM CASTING A FORCE FIELD TO BLOCK THE EXPLOSIONS THE CHIEF CLAIMED IT CUT OFF HIS CELL PHONE SIGNAL.
OH- OK OK
WAAAAH
SO THE CHIEF SEES THE COANUM EXPLODE, MY TEAMMATES ALL BOOT OUT FINALLY CHIEF LEAVES ME TO GO MEET HIS GIRLFRIEND!
THE SWARM OF FAREX BUGS SURROUNDED US ONE-BY-ONE, ALL MY TEAMMATES DISAPPEARED BEFORE I KNOW IT. I'M FIGHTING ALONE!
FOR EIGHT HOURS I FOUGHT FOR DEAR LIFE. THEN, WHEN IT WAS ALL OVER, SOME PERVERT APPEARED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT!
BWA HA HA HA
I HAVE THE WORST LUCK!
THIS IS UNFAIR! I CAN'T TAKE THIS INJUSTICE ANY LONGER! I WANT MY VACATION DAYS! NOW!
EVERYONE ELSE GETS TO LIE COMFY IN THEIR HOSPITAL BEDS WHY DO I HAVE TO STILL WORK? THAT'S NOT FAIR AT ALL!
AH--
COME TO THINK OF IT, I REMEMBER SEEING GAYOON'S TEAM COLLAPSE AND SPLIT UP MULTIPLE TIMES. HOWEVER, YOU ALWAYS REMAIN WITH HIM.
KEKEKE!
YOU MUST BE THE OLDEST VETERAN OF HIS TEAM BY NOW.
YEAH, WELL...
WHUMP
WHILE WE'RE ON THE TOPIC... WHAT DO YOU SAY?

IF YOU TRANSFER TO MY TEAM, I'LL TAKE REALLY GOOD CARE OF YOU...
BA-DUMP
STOP... STOP TEMPTING ME...
GEUMPYO IS SUCH A PLAYER
YOU LASTED THIS LONG I'M SURE THEY'LL LET YOU TRANSFER IF YOU ASK.
MY TEAM HAS NEVER COLLAPSED
I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU
KHUKK...
THANK YOU FOR THE THOUGHT
C'MON
WHAT'S WITH YOU? WHY ARE YOU SO LOYAL TO SOMEONE LIKE HIM?
HE TREATS HIS TEAM MEMBERS LIKE CANNON FODDER. HE'LL NEVER APPRECIATE YOU.
UM... EVEN IF HE DOESN'T, I JUST DON'T FEEL RIGHT ABOUT LEAVING
YOU'RE SO WEIRD
GAHOON DOESN'T KNOW HOW LUCKY HE IS

HMM... WELL, MAYBE NEXT TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT, EH?
HE BOOTED AFTER SEEING THE EXPLOSION, RIGHT? AND YOU STILL COMPLETED THE MISSION.
EVEN GAYOON HAS TO NOTICE THAT KIND OF COMMITMENT
RE... REALLY?
DBT
...
...
YOU IDIOT! OPEN YOUR EYES! HE'S EVIL! JOIN MY TEAM, DAMN IT!
AAAACK!
WA... WAIT...
HYAHAHAHA
GIVE UP ALREADY--!
NO FAIR TICKLING ME--
OH!
THERE GOES GAYOON. I GUESS HE'S HEADING TO THE BOARD. MAN, I CAN'T STAND HIM.

PANT PANT
IF... YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...
FAINT
OKAY, FINE. BUT GO TO THE I.N. PRIMARY FIRST AND GET YOURSELF CHECKED OUT JUST IN CASE.
THANK YOU.
AH, AND GET YOUR HOOK LOOKED AT WHILE YOU'RE AT IT!
YES, SIR.
CHIEF THERE YOU ARE.
SNEER
WHAT'S THIS NONSENSE? I THOUGHT THE ENTIRE TEAM WAS IN THE HOSPITAL. WHY ARE YOU HERE?
OH. I WAS THE LAST ONE ON SITE.
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE THAT'S STILL HEALTHY?
UM, YES. PROBABLY
BA-DUMP

ACK!
WHOOSH
ALRIGHT, TAKE THIS TO GET SERVICED AND PREPARE THE PAPERWORK.
I'M LEAVING
WHAT?!
WAIT, CHIEF...!
YOU JUST GOT HERE
SIGH
PLOP
THAT'S WHAT I GET FOR EXPECTING SOME CREDIT NO MATTER HOW SMALL
IT'S NOT LIKE I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF A PERSON HE IS.
I GUESS, I FEEL LIKE I OWE HIM SOMETHING.
BECAUSE I SOMETIMES HOPE...
THAT I WILL SOMEDAY SEE MYSELF...
IN THOSE CONCEITED EYES OF HIS.

CORE SCRAMBLE

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DOES ANYTHING HURT? ANYTHING UNCOMFORTABLE?
UM JUST A LITTLE MUSCLE ACHE.
YOU LOOK VERY GOOD FOR HAVING FOUGHT FOR EIGHT HOURS.
TAP TAP
I THINK YOU'RE JUST EXHAUSTED FROM CASTING SO MANY SPELLS. YOU'RE PHYSICALLY DRAINED.
YOU SHOULD RECOVER IN A FEW DAYS.
YOU HAVE SOME SCRATCHES AND MINOR EXPOSURE TO SOME OF THE FAREX POISON.
BUT OVERALL, YOU'RE FINE.
YOU FOUGHT AT THE SITE OF THE LEVEL "B" EXPLOSION, RIGHT? YOUR ENTIRE TEAM GOT BOOTED HERE FROM THERE.
YES.

SMIRK
YOU MORON... IF YOU CRIED LIKE YOU WERE IN PAIN, I COULDVE GOTTEN YOU A FEW DAYS SICK LEAVE.
BUT NOW, WHAT'S A LITTLE MUSCLE ACHE, HUH?
I HEARD YOU DEMANDING VACATION DAMS DOWN IN THE LOBBY
!!!
AAAACK! I'M GOING TO DIE!
EVERY MUSCLE ACHES LIKE CRAZY
FLIP FLOP
I TOLD YOU ALREADY. MUSCLE ACHES DON'T COUNT FOR ANYTHING KEKEKEH...
TOO LATE TO FAKE IT KID. AND THE FAREX ARE LOW-LEVEL, SO YOU DON'T EVEN GET A MEDAL FOR YOUR TROUBLE.
WAAAH BRING THE REPORT BACK.
TOO LATE. IT'S ALREADY IN THE SYSTEM
SOB
NO FAIR. I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN AS UPSET IF YOU DIDN'T TELL ME...
REMEMBER, YOUR BODY ALWAYS PAYS THE PRICE FOR STUPIDITY KEKEKEKEH
BESIDES WEIRD THINGS HAVE BEEN HAPPENING LATELY.
YOUR ENTIRE TEAM COLLAPSING IS ONE THING BUT YOU SHOULD PREPARE YOURSELF FOR MORE.
HUH? IS SOMETHING GOING ON?

I HEARD A TEAM PATROLLING THE TOWN OF JAM-O RAN INTO A STRANGE GROUP.
SOME SAY THEY MIGHT BE CORE HUNTERS.
YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ONE IN PERSON, RIGHT?
NO.
A CORE CONTAINS GREAT ENERGY FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION. THE MERE EXISTENCE OF ONE DRAWS BOTH HALLS AND BUGS ALIKE.
YOU MEAN A GROUP OF MUTANT BUGS OR SOMETHING?
NO. NOT BUGS.
CORE HUNTERS?
CORE HUNTERS ARE BETTER AT SENSING THE CORES THAN REGION-BASED ORGANIZATIONS LIKE OURS.
A HIGH PROBABILITY EXISTS THAT A CORE HAS MANIFESTED NEARBY.
POKE
THOSE FUNKS WILL DO ANYTHING TO GET THEIR HANDS ON THE CORES. THEY'LL EVEN ATTACK OUR COMBATANTS.
IT MAY END UP BEING A FIGHT BETWEEN THOSE WITH TRUE ABILITIES.
THE HALLS AND BUGS THAT ARE SURE TO APPEAR WILL BE PROBLEMS TOO, BUT...

I DETECT NOTHING WRONG WITH YOUR HOOK.
BUT THEN AGAIN, HOOKS VERY RARELY BREAK.
CHIEF LEE TOLD ME TO GET IT CHECKED OUT BECAUSE THE ENTIRE TEAM BOOTED BACK WITHOUT ME.
HAHA
THE HOOK ITSELF DOESN'T HOLD MUCH ENERGY. IT ONLY ANALYZES AND SENDS US INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR INJURIES.
THE SERVER HERE AT HEADQUARTERS CONTROLS THE ACTUAL TELEPORTATION. WE SEND YOU TO THE HEALING CAPSULE ASSIGNED TO YOUR HOOK.
SHOULD WE CHECK THIS TOO WHILE WE'RE AT IT?
NAH. I WASN'T BOOTED BACK BECAUSE I SUFFERED NO INJURIES. THERE'S NO NEED
YEAH. EVERYTHING LOOKED FINE AT THE ANNUAL CHECK-UP.
BY THE WAY,
THIS PLACE WAS CRAZY YESTERDAY DUE TO THE MASSIVE AMOUNT OF BOOTS.
BUT I HEARD THAT.
YOU'RE AMAZING.

YOU'RE IN CHIEF GAYOON'S TEAM...
YOU POOR THING...
...YES...
WHENEVER WE HANDLE A MASSIVE TELEPORTATION LIKE THIS, NINE OUT OF TEN TIMES, IT INVOLVES HIS TEAM.
HE HAS A BAD REP WITH THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT TOO.
SOME OF THE COMBATANTS ARE BEING HELD BACK BECAUSE OF THIS BATTLE.
DON'T INJURE THE HAND THAT WEAVES MAGIC. EVEN IF IT HEALS, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO CAST SPELLS ANYMORE.
POOF
THAT'S GOOD
YOUR ARM FEELS OKAY, RIGHT?
AMAZINGLY YOU MADE IT OUT OF THIS ONE SAFELY BUT YOUR TEAM IS BASICALLY DECIMATED...
CLICK
OH, HERE YOU ARE.

YOU DROPPED OFF CHIEF GAYOON'S SPECIAL WEAPON, RIGHT?
YES.
WE SERVICED IT PLEASE TAKE IT WITH YOU
HRN!
SPECIAL WEAPONS CAN ONLY BE PICKED UP BY THE USER.
WELL... I CALLED THE PERSON ASSOCIATED WITH THE WEAPON'S SERIAL CODE...
AND HE SAID "TELL THE LITTLE PUNK WHO DROPPED IT OFF TO BRING IT BACK TO ME"...
...YOU POOR THING...
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
PAT PAT
THANK YOU
NO...
NO... ...YEAH...
PLEASE INSPECT IT FIRST.
JUST GLANCE IT OVER.
NO NEED IT'S NOT MINE, SO...
CLICK

SRRRAG
I USED TO BE A POWERLESS KID
I LEARNED LATER THAT THE "THINGS" I COULD SEE WERE EITHER CALLED BUGS OR HALLS.
EVERYTHING, A BOB, CRUCIFIED, BECOMES DECAYED, DECRAYED OR DISEASED.
ANY PART OF ANYTHING TOUCHED BY A HALL WILL DISAPPEAR, LIKE IT WAS SLICED OUT OF EXISTENCE.
AT FIRST, ALL I COULD EVER DO WAS JUST SEE THEM.
I NEVER KNEW WHAT ELSE TO DO SO I JUST TREMBLED IN FEAR.
I HAD NO IDEA...

THAT PEOPLE EXISTED WHO ELIMINATED THOSE "THINGS"
GUK
KA
BOOM

HE POSSESSED OVERWHELMING POWER.
AND HE GOT RID OF ALL OF THOSE "THINGS."
AH—
REEL
THWAP
UM WAIT WAIT!
I...UH THOSE CREATURES ARE NEAR MY HOUSE, TOO. NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT NOT ONLY DID HE
DISPLAY RANK EIGHT MAGIC TO AN EIGHT YEAR-OLD COMMONER, THE HALL STREAMED DOWN FROM THE SKY, GETTING BIGGER AND BIGGER. STRANGELY, IT SEEMED TO CUT WHATEVER IT TOUCHED OUT OF EXISTENCE!
THAT THING WILL TOUCH OUR HEADS SOON!
I DON'T REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT I SAID TO HIM.
I...I CAN SEE THEM, BUT MY PARENTS CAN'T
PLEASE, GET RID OF THEM FOR US.
I...I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU WANT...!

THE HALL TERRIFIED ME. FEAR DROVE ME OUT OF MY MIND
EXCEPT, I CLEARLY REMEMBER..
HE SHOVED ME AWAY WITH AN ANNOYED GLANCE.
LIKE I WAS JUST SOME SORT OF INSECT TO HIM..
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, NOT ONLY DID HE DISPLAY RANK EIGHT MAGIC TO AN EIGHT YEAR-OLD COMMONER,
BUT HE DIDN'T EVEN CAST A FORCE FIELD. ANYWAY...
KE KE
I BEGGED MY PARENTS TO MOVE AWAY, BUT THEY DIDN'T LISTEN
"I'LL DO ANYTHING IF YOU GET RID OF IT."
I REALLY MEANT IT
AFTER I LOST HIM, ALL I COULD DO WAS WATCH THE HALL GROW NEARER AND NEARER..
WHAT SHOULD I HAVE SAID
TO MAKE HIM AGREE?

SUDDENLY
RIGHT THEN AND THERE...
HE APPEARED.
I FROZE AND COULDN'T EVEN SPEAK ONE WORD WHEN I SAW HIM.
MY MIND TORMENTED ITSELF OVER WHAT I SHOULD HAVE SAID TO MAKE HIM AGREE TO HELP ME, AS A RESULT...
SHRRRRK
GLANCE

"DELETE HALL"
POW
HE POSSESSED THE POWER TO COMPLETELY ELIMINATE A HALL, NOT MERELY CLOSE OR RESTRAIN IT
THAT WAS HIS SPECIAL POWER
...!!!
AH..!
THA...THANK YOU!
YOU CAME AFTER ALL!
HUH?
THERE'S A KID HERE, YOU DIDN'T EVEN CAST A FORCE FIELD?
GAGOON, DO YOU KNOW HIM?
?
WHAT ARE YOU?

COLD WORDS AND A COLD STARE.
OH..I..
HE DIDN'T REMEMBER ME AT ALL.
HE WASN'T HERE BECAUSE I ASKED HIM TO COME.
BLUSH
...!!!
OH..IT'S...IT'S NOTHING.
SORRY!
KAPWINNGG
THANK YOU!
HEY! YOU! WAIT!
WOH
HEY KID, YOU CAN SEE THESE THINGS?
HUH? YES.
SCOUT
NOT BAD. WANT TO LEARN HOW TO WEAVE MAGIC?
HUH
YOU CAN...LEARN THAT?
EVEN IF HE DIDN'T COME BECAUSE I ASKED HIM.
HE SHOWED ME THAT THE "THINGS" WERE NOT TO BE FEARED.
HE SAVED ME FROM...THAT...FEAR.
EVEN IF HE HAS NO IDEA.
TO ME, HE...

SAVED ME. SORT OF
HE'S SELF-CENTERED, IRRESPONSIBLE AND ABUSIVE...
AND THE MORE YOU GET TO KNOW HIM, THE WORSE HE GETS
A PART OF ME THINKS THERE'S JUST NO POINT
HE DIDN'T EVEN REMEMBER ME AFTER I WAS ASSIGNED TO HIS TEAM
OH. SO BACK THEN...
WHAT? YOU'RE ANNOYING ME. SILENCE!
I WONDER IF HE EVEN KNOWS THAT I'M HIS LONGEST SURVIVING TEAM MEMBER.
—
SOMETIMES I WONDER IF HE EVEN KNOWS MY NAME?
MAYBE I'M JUST "UNDERLING #1"
CLICK
WHAT IS IT?
OH, CHIEF.
I PICKED UP YOUR WEAPON.
SO? BRING IT OVER.
WHERE ARE YOU?
HOME.
OKAY... UM, CHIEF
WHAT?

YOU KNOW SPECIAL WEAPONS CAN ONLY BE PICKED UP BY THEIR USERS
I'M FINE BRINGING IT OVER, BUT IF SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN ON THE WAY, THE INVESTIGATORS...
FUCK...
STOP NAGGING ME. I'M SO SICK OF IT YOU'RE ACTING AS IF YOU'RE MY WIFE.
KYA! WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO, BABE?
!!
JUST MY WORTHLESS SUBORDINATE.
WHAT? A SUBORDINATE WHO NAGS YOU LIKE A WIFE?
KY-AH---
OH, SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE WITH YOUR GIRLFRIEND. WOULDN'T I BE BOTHERING YOU IF I CAME OVER?
DON'T BOTHER US, JUST LEAVE IT AND GO
HUH? WHY? I WANT TO SEE HIM!
KYAAACK!
WHAT'S THIS? HE'S GOOD-LOOKING!
YOU CALLED HIM A NAG I THOUGHT HE'D LOOK WIMPY OR SOMETHING!
HAHA... UM. HERE. YOUR... DELIVERY...

HEY, WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
DO YOU HAVE A GIRL-FRIEND?
?!
NO, NO, I...!
KYAAACK
HE'S SO CUTE~!
HYERAN, STOP DROOLING OVER ANOTHER GUY IN FRONT OF ME.
WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT ASKING HIM FOR HIS NAME?
THAT'S CHAEUN SHIN. HE'S MY SUBORDINATE. HE'S PERSISTENT. SO DON'T GET TOO CLOSE.
WHAT'S THIS? ARE YOU JEALOUS, BABE?
-KYAAH
BLUSH
...!
HE...REMEMBERS MY NAME...
WELL, THAT'S A GIVEN, BUT STILL
YOU TOO, PUNK.
...HEY
YES, YES?!
IF YOU TRY TO TAKE SOMETHING THAT BELONGS TO ME, I'LL KILL YOU.
...OF COURSE...

HMPH.
KLICK
TAK
CH..CHIEF!
YOU CAN'T REVEAL WEAPONS IN FRONT OF AN OUTSIDER!
NOT EVEN IF SHE'S YOUR GIRLFRIEND! IT'S FORBIDDEN!
ENOUGH WITH THE NAGGING, FUCK!
IF YOU TAKE IT OUT, I'LL CAST A FORCE FIELD! YOU'LL DISAPPEAR IN FRONT OF YOUR GIRLFRIEND! HOW ABOUT THAT?
WHAT IS IT? I CAN'T SEE IT?
THIS IS... CLASSIFIED COMPANY MATERIAL. SORRY
TSK.
TAK
HMM-- SO, IT'S TRUE THAT YOU LIKE TO NAG GAYOON.
...
HAHA
CHAEUN?
FREEZE
ARE YOU FREE THIS WEEKEND?
...?!

WEE... WEEK... WEEKEND?
SHOULDN'T YOU BE GOING ON A DATE WITH THE CHIEF?
HUH? GAYOON WILL BE WORKING THIS WEEKEND.
...?!
LET'S MEET SECRETLY.
HE LEFT A BATTLE TO BE WITH THIS WOMAN, BUT HE DIDN'T MAKE PLANS WITH HER FOR THE WEEKEND?
IS HE CHEATING? EVEN HIS RELATIONSHIPS ARE ABSOLUTELY HORRIBLE!
TAP A
I GOT YOUR NUMBER!
RITTTING
MY PHONE
IF YOU DON'T MEET ME WITH WEEKEND,
I'LL TELL HIM THAT YOU TOOK MY NUMBER.
WELCOME TO...
HELL
PLEASE RESTRAIN YOURSELF
SHE WANTS TO CHEAT ON HER CHEATING BOYFRIEND WITH ME?

I'LL SEE YOU SATURDAY 3PM AT SHINCHON STATION

PLEASE, DON'T DO THIS. YOU SHOULD DEVOTE YOURSELF ONLY TO YOUR BOYFRIEND!

KYA! BUT, YOU'RE SO CUTE!

I REFUSE TO COME!

SCAREDY-CAT ARE YOU THAT AFRAID OF GAYOON?

OF COURSE I AM.. BUT THAT'S NOT EVEN THE POINT...

I am afraid... and..!

UHM

KYAAK!

CHIEF IS A BAD GUY, BE CAREFUL

OH, MY GOSH! HE'S SO CUTE!

IS HE WORRIED ABOUT ME?

SHOWING THIS TO GAYOON WOULD BE FUN, BUT I'LL KEEP IT SECRET IF YOU COME OUT ON SATURDAY

LET GO, DAMMIT...

SELF-

DESTRUCTION

IT'S TODAY DON'T FORGET
EITHER WAY CHIEF IS GOING TO KILL ME...
WHETHER OR NOT THIS COUNTS AS A LOVE TRIANGLE, I'M TOTALLY AGAINST IT!
I DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED
HEY, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU THIS TIME?
GEUMPYO...
ARE YOU BORED? WANT TO JOIN MY TEAM NOW?
I'M LEAVING SOON...
A JOINT MISSION INVOLVING TWO TEAMS? WE NEED MORE BODIES
KLICK KLICK
YEAH. THEY'RE EXPECTING A LEVEL 5* HALL TO APPEAR IN SHINCHON.
SHINCHON...!
SHOULD WE EVACUATE THE CIVILIANS?
SHINCHON ON A WEEKEND COVERING THE AREA WITH A FORCE FIELD WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. PLUS, THE COPS WILL BE THERE.
WHY? DO YOU HAVE PLANS THERE?
HURRY UP AND CALL, SO WE CAN CHOOSE SOMEWHERE ELSE TO MEET
?
WAH AH AH

THEY EXPECT ABOUT 21 HALLS TO APPEAR. THEY'RE SPREADING OUT ALL OVER THE SHINCHON AREA.
I'LL SEND THEIR COORDINATES TO EVERYONE'S GPS SYSTEM.
NO NEED TO MARK THE LITTLE ONES.
LOOK THEM OVER AND MARK ONLY THE ONES WITH THE POTENTIAL TO TURN INTO LEVEL "A".
IT LOOKS LIKE C.O. IS ALREADY ON THEIR WAY.
PAT!
THEY'RE REACTING QUICKER THAN I ANTICIPATED
YEAH, BUT THEY'RE WEAK. JUST GIVE 'EM A LITTLE SPANK ON THE TUSH AND THEY DISAPPEAR.
IF THEY REALLY GET IN YOUR WAY, JUST LET THEM HAVE IT.

KEH KEH
YES, SIR.
STOMP
STOMP
CLARUS HUH...
WELL, LOOKS LIKE THEY HAVE ONE WORTHWHILE CHARACTER AMONG THEIR RANKS AFTER ALL
HOLD ON WILL HE BE THERE TODAY?
...
I WONDER HOW WELL HE STANDS UP AGAINST MY PEOPLE.
PSTST
SHOULD BE FUN TO WATCH...

WHAT?
NOTHING. JUST LOOKING AROUND.
HA. BINGO

CORE SCRAMBLE

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AUTHORITIES CLAIM THEY DETECTED A TERRORIST THREAT

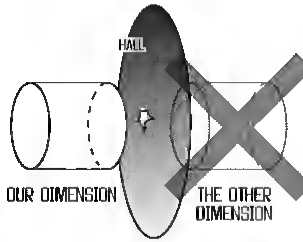
BUT IT'S JUST A PRETEXT.
DEATH AND DESTRUCTION OFTEN
FOLLOW IN A HALL'S WAKE.

HALLS ARE DIMENSIONAL
CONDUITS THAT CONNECT OUR
WORLD TO ANOTHER DIMENSION.

WE CAN TRAVEL THROUGH THEM FOR
TRAVEL THOUGH, BECAUSE
MATTER FROM OUR
WORLD CAN'T EXIST IN
THAT OTHER DIMENSION.

ANY MATERIALS THAT CROSS
OVER THE DIMENSIONAL
THRESHOLD ARE INSTANTLY
COMPRESSED OR VAPORIZED

TO PUT IT SIMPLY.



A HALL IS A BOUNDARY
THAT USUALLY CAN'T
BE CROSSED.

THE ONLY THING THAT
CAN RESIST THIS EFFECT
ARE MAGICAL SPELLS.

THOSE WHO POSSESS VERY STRONG LEVELS OF MAGIC* WON'T SUFFER INJURY EVEN IF THEY COME INTO PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH A HALL.

HOWEVER, EXPOSURE TO THE OTHER DIMENSION IS STILL POISONOUS TO THEM. IT'S NOT AS HARMFUL AS THE AMPUTATION A CIVILIAN MIGHT SUFFER BUT IT STILL ISN'T GOOD

*IN CLARUS ORBUS THOSE WHO POSSESS THIS LEVEL OF MAGIC OR HIGHER BECOME CHIEFS WHO LEAD TEAMS INTO BATTLE

WHENEVER A HALL APPEARS, THE AUTHORITIES EVACUATE THE CIVILIANS AND TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO MINIMIZE ANY COLLATERAL DAMAGE.

...SO I'M CORRECT IN ASSUMING THAT THIS MAN WOULD BE HERE ONLY BECAUSE HE'S A MEMBER OF ONE OF THE ORGANIZATIONS?

SO, YOU DECIDED TO MEET WITH ME AFTER ALL.

I'M ONLY HERE BECAUSE YOU'RE MY CHIEF'S GIRLFRIEND. THIS PLACE HAS BECOME DANGEROUS. PLEASE GO SOMEWHERE ELSE.

AAAH

?

AND YET HE'S NOT WEARING COMBAT GEAR?

I'LL CONSIDER GOING IF YOU COME WITH ME.
I DON'T LIKE MEETING WOMEN WHO HAVE BOYFRIENDS ALREADY.
EH. LIGHTEN UP. THIS IS JUST A CASUAL DATE.
HA...
THIS ISN'T WORKING...
STARE
...?
UM... SO... MISS HYERAN, RIGHT?
JUST CALL ME HYERAN.
...MISS HYERAN.

Wall Street
INSTITUTE
YOU'RE NOT MY TYPE. I HAVE NO INTENTION OF DATING YOU.
OUR PERSONALITIES DON'T MATCH EITHER. IT WOULD BE A WASTE OF TIME.
YOU SEEM TO ENJOY PUTTING ME IN AWKWARD SITUATIONS.
..WHAT THE. YOU'RE SO STIFF. STOP ACTING LAME.
I GUESS YOU DON'T CARE IF I SHOW GAYOON YOUR TEXT?
BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WILL BE HURT IF YOU STICK AROUND. PLEASE JUST GO.
DO YOU HONESTLY THINK YOU'LL HAVE FUN DRAGGING ME AROUND KNOWING I'M WITH YOU ONLY BECAUSE OF YOUR THREATS?
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU TELL CHIEF. JUST GET OUTTA HERE.

ARGH!
YOU'LL REGRET REJECTING ME!
TAK
TAK
SIGH
GET HOME SAFELY.
WHISTLE
REEL
DOES HE STILL SUFFER INJURY FROM THE BATTLE?
DID HE COME IN CONTACT WITH A HALL?
HEY..
PLOP
!!!

PBT
BWAHAHAHAHA!
ARGHHH
WHAT?! ARE YOU HAVING FUN?!
IS GOING TO KILL ME
NO. I WAS CONCERNED BECAUSE YOU COLLAPSED. WHY ARE YOU SO ANGRY?
KEKEKEH
GROAR
WHATEVER. I SAW YOU LAUGHING AT ME. YOU WERE WATCHING EVERY-THING. I'M SO DEAD...
YOU GOT IT WRONG
YOUR COLLAPSE CAUSED ME CONCERN.
AH...

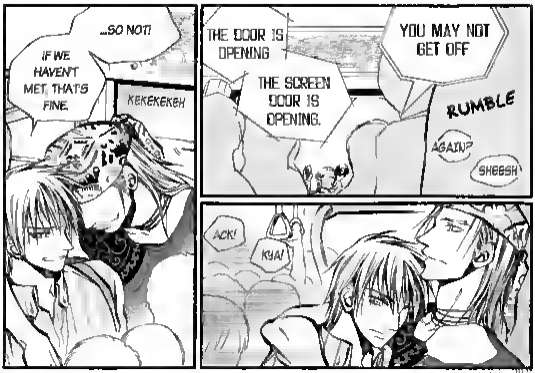
SORRY FOR SCARING YOU.
I FINALLY REALIZED HOW DOOMED I AM, BUT ONLY AFTER SENDING HER AWAY...
TAP
TAP
KEKEKEH
YOU WERE PRETTY HARSH REJECTING HER.
SIGH
I WONDER WHAT SHE'LL TELL HER BOYFRIEND WHO HAPPENS TO BE MY SUPERIOR. I'M SURE HE WOULDN'T KILL ME FOR REAL, I HOPE.
HMM
OR MAYBE HE WILL...
KEKEKEH
ARGH
HEY GET OUT OF HERE! DIDN'T YOU SEE THE COPS CLEARING OUT THIS PLACE?
KEKEKEKEKEH
KEKEH
WHAT ABOUT YOU? YOU'RE NOT A COP EITHER.
?
WELL, THAT'S BECAUSE I... AM LEAVING WORK, SO I SHOULD ALSO GET GOING.
AHA. WHAT A SHAME.
I WAS HOPING FOR SOMETHING FUN TO WATCH.
WELL, THIS WAS FUN, TOO IT'S ALL GOOD.

GET HOME SAFELY
GRIP
WHAT THE...
LOOK. I TOLD YOU TO SCRAM.
...YEAH, BUT MY FRIENDS ARE HERE.
LOOK, THIS AREA IS DANGEROUS! I'M SURE THE COPS SENT AWAY YOUR FRIENDS, SO GET OUT OF HERE NOW.
IN FACT, IT'S SO DANGEROUS HERE THAT EVEN THE COPS WILL NEED TO EVACUATE. DON'T COME BACK UNTIL IT'S SAFE.
UH... HMM...

THIS STATION IS NOW BARRICADED DUE TO THE EMERGENCY SITUATION
BOARDING THIS TRAIN IS THE ONLY EXIT.
SQUEEZE
...I'M NOT RUNNING AWAY
HMM... I DON'T MEAN TO BE RUDE, BUT YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU WOULD LISTEN TO THE COPS EITHER.
CORRECT
SORRY. NO MATTER HOW STRONG AND SMART YOU THINK YOU ARE, STAYING HERE WILL ENDANGER YOUR LIFE...
JUST TELL YOUR FRIENDS THAT SOME WEIRDO DRAGGED YOU OUT.
...NO.

SORRY, THIS SITUATION SOMEHOW FEELS LIKE I'M BEING PICKED UP.
WAHAHAHA!
THIS STATION IS NOW BARRICADED. YOU MAY NOT EXIT AT THIS PLATFORM!
THE TRAIN LOOKS SO CROWDED AND NO ONE IS ALLOWED OFF.
TONS OF PEOPLE MUST HAVE HAD PLANS IN SHINCHON THIS WEEKEND.
AND YOU? ARE YOU MEETING ANYONE?
YOU SAW ME STRUGGLE TO GET RID OF THAT GIRL.
KEKEKEH
SHE LOOKED CUTE.
TCH
I DON'T CARE HOW CUTE SHE LOOKS. I SIMPLY DON'T WANT ANY COMPLICATIONS.
PBTBT

WHOOSH
?
WAIT A SECOND...
HAVE WE MET... SOMEWHERE BEFORE?
HUH?
UH... HMM...
NO? I'M SURE I WOULD REMEMBER IF WE HAD
MY MEMORY SEEMS FOGGY, BUT NOT TOTALLY GONE. STRANGE...
UGH
FIRST YOU PICK ME UP. NOW YOU'RE HITTING ON ME?
?


...SO NOT!
IF WE HAVEN'T MET, THAT'S FINE.
KEKEKEKEH
THE DOOR IS OPENING
YOU MAY NOT GET OFF
THE SCREEN DOOR IS OPENING.
RUMBLE
AGAIN?
SHEESH
ACK!
KYA!

I GUESS THEY BARRICADED THE STATIONS ALL THE WAY TO HONGIK UNIVERSITY.
HOW ANNOYING...
MUMBLE

SLIP
?!
WHAT...
HMM...SO THIS IS A CLAIRUS LEASH.
FLINCH
DON'T MIND ME. I SIMPLY WONDERED WHAT YOU WORE ON YOUR NECK.
...THAT TONE. THAT CIGARETTE SMELL...

YOU'RE THE PERVERT!
PERVERT?
DID SOME-ONE SAY PERVERT?
COPS
MUMBLE
MUMBLE
AH...
MM...
...DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE BEEN STALKING ME...
MUMBLE
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? YOU'RE THE ONE THAT WOULDN'T LEAVE ME ALONE. OUR MEETING HERE WAS PURE COINCIDENCE
...UMM.
I WAS ONLY CHECKING YOU FOR LIFE-THREATENING INJURIES. THAT'S ALL.
WHISPER
WHISPER
YOU PATTED ME DOWN? YOU EVEN KISSED ME.
YOU LOOKED TOO TIRED TO DRINK WATER. THINK OF IT AS LIQUID CPR.
I WASN'T TIRED!
FINE. BUT GET OFF ME. WHY ARE YOU HOLDING ME?
IT'S NOT MY FAULT IT'S PACKED IN HERE. WHAT CAN I DO?
WHY IS YOUR ARM AROUND MY WAIST?
I'M HAPPY THAT YOU REMEMBER ME.
KEKEKEH

I WAS ONLY TRYING TO HELP. BUT YOU THOUGHT I WAS A PERVERT.
OH, WELL, IF YOU'RE GOING TO INSIST I'M A PERVERT
NO MATTER WHAT I DO, THEN I MIGHT AS WELL DO SOMETHING FUN.
GASP!
AFTER WHAT YOU DID. HOW COULD I JUDGE YOU ANY OTHER WAY?
?!
GRIP
WHUMPH
GASP.
OOO..
HAAAAAAA.
KOFF
HEH
THE CABIN IS TOO CROWDED FOR YOU TO RUN AWAY.
WHOA
YOU TRAPPED ME IN THIS TINY SPACE.
KAFF
I'M A PRO
YOU'RE PRETTY SOLID. I FELT LIKE I WAS PUNCHING A TIRE.
HA..
KEKEKEH

KRROOOM
PECK

PLEASE EXIT TO YOUR RIGHT.
I'LL SEE YOU AROUND
PLEASE WATCH THE GAP IN THE PLATFORM AS YOU EXIT THE TRAIN.
PLEASE STAND CLEAR OF THE CLOSING DOORS.
THE SCREEN DOOR IS CLOSING
...I'M SURE IF IT'S MEANT TO BE, WE'LL MEET AGAIN.

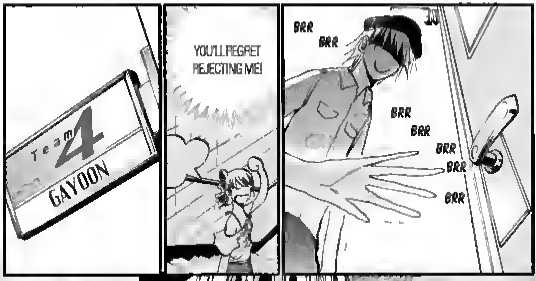
WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN, FOR SURE.
THUMP
PSHHH

THMP
HEY. THERE'S HYUNJI.
THMP
MOONHOO! WHERE ARE YOU HIDING?
I GOT PICKED UP BY A CUTE KID
KEKEKEH
THMP
WHY AM I NOT SUR PRISED.
WE FOUND SEVEN HALLS. EACH ONE MIGHT BE LEVEL "A".
PROCURE THEM.
TAK
TAK
TAK
WE'LL RUN INTO THE CLARUS TEAMS SOON. OH.
TEAM "S" JUST RAN INTO CLARUS WHILE MARKING THE HALLS.
THE BATTLE HAS BEGUN.

WOO-HOO!
SO EXCITING
I TOOK THE SUBWAY AND CROSSED THE RIVER ALREADY.
SEND ME THE COORDINATES
HOW FAR DID YOU GO?
STOP BABBLING AND GET BACK HERE. WHERE ARE YOU?
CROOSH
OKAY, SHALL I GET TO WORK NOW?
PBT

I WAS SO BUSY ARGUING WITH THE PERVERT

THAT I COMPLETELY FORGOT SOMETHING



WHAT DID SHE TELL HIM? THAT I SEDUCED HER?!

HE PROBABLY CAME IN TODAY, RIGHT? EVERYONE ELSE IS STILL RECOVERING, SO I'LL BE THE ONLY ONE IN OUR TEAM'S LOUNGE

FORGET THE FACT THAT SHE WAS CHEATING HE'LL KILL ME FOR TRYING TO TOUCH HIS THINGS

WOULD HE REALLY KILL ME?

NO OF COURSE, I'D BOOT OUT BEFORE I DIE FOR REAL

I HEAR A COMBATANT GOT BOOTED OUT BY HIS OWN CHIEF?
MUMBLE
MUMBLE
HUH? CHAEUN.
THAT STORY IS A SAD LEGEND PASSED DOWN FOR GENERATIONS A LONG, LONG TIME AGO, IN A PLACE CALLED CLARUS, THERE LIVED A YOUNG MAN NAMED CHAEUN
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT IN THE HALL?
GEUMPYO... OOPS I MEAN--
CHIEF LEE. CHIEF SONG.
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN LOOKING SO GOOD LATELY ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT INJURED?
HAHA
YES. I'M IN PERFECT HEALTH.
I GOT MY HOOK CHECKED OUT. TOO THE DEVICE IS WORKING JUST FINE.
I'M SURE I'LL BOOT OUT BEFORE I DIE, THANK GOODNESS
HAHAHAHA
YOU REALLY DON'T LOOK GOOD ..
GAYOON STILL HASN'T COME IN YET?

WHAT THE. I REALIZE GAYOON IS A RANK II LEADER WITH SPECIAL ABILITIES, BUT HE'S COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL.
THEY NEVER SHOULD HAVE GIVEN HIM A TEAM.
?!
PDT
I AGREE, AND HE'S STILL A RANK II LEADER.
SO WHAT?! IS IT AN ABILITY TO SUCK THE LIFE OUT OF DOZENS OF PEOPLE WITH ABILITIES?
WHAT DO YOU THINK? YOU'VE BEEN WORKING UNDER GAYOON THE LONGEST
UH.. DON'T PUT ME ON THE SPOT LIKE THAT. HE'S STILL MY DIRECT SUPERIOR.
...
HEY, HEY
TRUE.
UGH. I CAN'T STAND HIM.
...?
THMP
THMP
IT'S OKAY CALM DOWN.
SHE'S JUST UPSET BECAUSE TWO OF HER COMBATANTS BOOTED OUT DURING HER LAST BATTLE.
TWO..I I GUESS SUCH A LARGE OUTBREAK WAS REALLY DANGEROUS.
NO ACTUALLY IT WASN'T BUGS.

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SOME PSYCHOS ATTACKED HER COMBATANTS TO MARK THE HALL
THEY WERE BOOTED OUT BY PEOPLE?
EVERYONE'S EDGY BECAUSE OF IT
WHO WERE THEY? DO YOU THINK THEY WERE COKE HUNTERS OR SOMETHING?
I DON'T KNOW ANYWAY GAYOON PUT HIS ENTIRE TEAM IN RECOVERY
YOUR WHOLE TEAM IS STILL OUT OF COMMISSION, RIGHT? YOU WON'T BE GETTING ANY TEAM MISSIONS FOR A WHILE...
DO YOU WANT TO JOIN MY TEAM UNTIL YOURS RECOVERS?
GASP
GRAB
YES.. I WILL
UNTIL MY TEAM RETURNS
YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD
BRR BRR BRR BRR
ARE YOU OKAY?
BRR BRR
DREAMING OF EXTENDING HIS LIFE

CHAAASH
PAH SHA SHA SHA SHA
GROUP 3, INCREASE THE FORCE FIELD. DON'T LET IT ESCAPE!
THE TARGET IS MOVING TO AREA A-24.
GOOD GROUP 1 FORMATION B! WAIT UNTIL THE TARGET ARRIVES!
ROGER!
BAH SHA SHAA
TAK

GAAAAAH

Chapter 04 [Bug Sniper]
CLARUS ORBIS

SHAK
THMP
PAH
SHA
SH.AK
FROOSH
CAPTURE FIELD!
CHAAASH
COANUM CAPTURED! A-24!
OKAY COMING NOW! GROUP 2, PURIFY THE CONTAMINATED AIR!
ROGER!

SOMETHING'S WRONG!
WE CAN'T SUPPRESS THE COANUM!
WHAT? WHAT ABOUT THE CAPTURE FIELD?
IT'S STILL ON BUT..! WE CAN'T SUPPRESS THE COANUM'S MAGIC!
KRRRRRR
?!

!!!
MAINTAIN THE CAPTURE FIELD!
WAIT IT'S TOO..!
SOMETHING IS HIDING LOW TO THE NORTH!
IT'S MOVING TOWARD US!
KWHUMP
KWEEEEE

GROUP 2 GET TO A-24!
PAH
SHA
SHAK
GASP
KROOOOO
SQUIRM
SQUIRM

BACK UP CHAELIN SHIN! HURRY!
YES SIR!
TA DA DA
ROOOO
PHSHOO
PHSHOO
FROOOSH
WEEEEEE

KROOM
KROOM
PANT
PANT
...COANUM CAPTURED
LET'S FINISH IT

BY STUDYING THE MAGIC SOURCE OF A BUG, YOU CAN LOCATE ITS NUCLEUS.
SHOOT THE NUCLEUS ONCE.
THEN, CAST A FORCE FIELD ON THE FLOOR OR WALL THAT THE BUG IS TOUCHING.
EVEN A LEADER OF RANK 4 OR LOWER CAN HOLD IT FOR A SHORT WHILE.
OOH
THAT SOUNDS REASONABLE.
CAN YOU DO IT?
WE'RE TAUGHT NEVER TO FIGHT A LEVEL "A" WITH FEWER THAN FIVE COMBATANTS, SO WE NEVER HAD A CHANCE.
IT SOUNDS EASY, BUT HOW DO YOU DETERMINE THE NUCLEUS OF AN ATTACKING BUG AND HIT IT WITHIN A SPLIT-SECOND?
FAILURE MEANS YOU HAVE NO TIME TO BOOT OUT. YOU'RE HEAVEN-BOUND IF THEY ORDERED ME TO DO IT. I'D FREAK OUT
WHOA
YOU'RE INCREDIBLE.
EEP
HAHA
WE DON'T USUALLY GET THAT DESPERATE. TEAM 2 COORDINATES WELL AS A GROUP.

PEOPLE WHO CAN HUNT THESE CREATURES IN GROUPS DON'T NEED TO LEARN HOW TO SURVIVE DESPERATELY AS INDIVIDUALS.
LISTEN TO THE MAN WHO SURVIVED THE TEAM 4 OF DEATH.
BWAHAHA
CHIEF LEE.
WELCOME
THANKS TO OUR PRETTY LITTLE THING NO ONE GOT HURT
WHAT THAT'S IT?
SQUEEZE
THIS PRETTY LITTLE THING...?
ROAR
OKAY I'LL BUY DINNER!
GELIMPYO YOU ROCK!
WHEE--
WE LOVE YOU, CHIEF!
OH, YEEAAH

SIZZLE
SIZZLE
SO, YOU TRULY NEED GUNG-HO SKILLS TO SURVIVE TEAM 4?
GRUNT
WELL... I THINK I LEARNED A FEW TRICKS WHILE STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE.
WOW LOOK, CHIEF
IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT THAT WE CAN'T FIGHT AS INDIVIDUALS
WHAT?!
KROAR
RRR
GRRR
I'LL GRANT YOU A TRANSFER IF YOU WANT TO SERVE UNDER GAYOON! GO GAIN SOME SKILLS!
WHEN YOU GET BOOTED OUT A FEW TIMES YOU'LL HAVE SOME WAR STORIES TO TELL. THAT SHOULD BE FUN!
BWAAHHAHA
HAHAHA
NO! YOU'RE THE BEST CHIEF!
CHATTER
CHATTER

WHAT IS IT?
HERE
AH... IT'S NICE TO WORK IN A REAL TEAM.
IF WE DON'T FOLLOW HIS ORDERS OR DO ANYTHING HE DOESN'T LIKE..
WHAT? GAYOON NEVER TAKES YOU OUT?
BUT THEN AGAIN, HE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THE TYPE.
YEAH... WELL... THERE'S THAT, BUT... I'M TALKING ABOUT THE SITES..
...HUH? THAT DOESN'T SOUND UNREASONABLE...?
ISN'T OBEDIENCE A GIVEN FOR AN COMBATANT?
YOUR TEAM NEVER DISOBEYS THE CHIEF?
OH, NO. THAT'S NOT IT...

TEAM 4 USES NO BATTLE STRATEGIES.
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
HIS TEAM HAS PROBLEMS, BUT THEY HAVE A HIGH RATE OF MISSION COMPLETION!
HOW DO YOU COMPLETE MISSIONS WITHOUT BATTLE STRATEGIES?
WELL, THAT IS...
CHIEF EITHER DOES ALL THE WORK HIMSELF OR...
SO, THE MEMBERS DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
THE TEAM MEMBERS MUST SOMEHOW COMPLETE THE JOB WITHOUT THE CHIEF.
AND THE ENTIRE TEAM SUFFERS HEAVY CASUALTIES.
-
HEY, DID YOU HEAR THAT?
YOU SHOULD BE THANKFUL YOU DIDN'T GET ASSIGNED TO TEAM 4
FATE
YOU'RE THE BEST, CHIEF

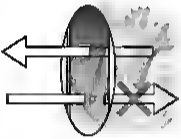
MOST OF THE TIME, HALLS ARE ELIMINATED BY CLOSING THEM

HALLS CAN BE CATEGORIZED INTO TWO TYPES: OPEN AND CLOSED

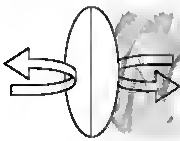
ACTIVE PASSAGEWAY

MATERIAL FROM THIS DIMENSION IS CUT OFF UPON CROSSING THE THRESHOLD. THESE HALLS ARE RANKED ACCORDING TO THEIR SIZE AND THE STRENGTH OF THE BUGS THEREIN

OPEN HALL



CLOSED HALL



INACTIVE PASSAGEWAY

NO INTERACTION BETWEEN OUR WORLD AND THE BUGS. THESE ARE HARMLESS EXCEPT FOR THE RISK OF REACTIVATION.

COMPLETELY DESTROYING THE HALLS IS A VERY SPECIAL ABILITY ONLY RECENTLY DISCOVERED

A TYPICAL "HALL SEAL" REFERS TO CLOSING A HALL.

MOREOVER, A CLOSED HALL CAN ALWAYS OPEN AGAIN. IT MUST BE MONITORED CAREFULLY.

THEN, SOME HALLS ARE MARKED BY OUR COMBATANTS.

WE SEAL THEM IN THE OPEN STATE.

IF THEY'RE OPEN, HOW ARE THEY CONSIDERED SEALED?

THESE HALLS DON'T DESTROY MATTER FROM THIS DIMENSION. HOWEVER, BUGS STILL COME THROUGH THEM.
THE HALLS BECOME A ONE WAY PASSAGE, SO TO SPEAK.
SO, YOU DON'T GET HURT TOUCHING THE THRESHOLD BUT BUGS KEEP POURING OUT.
RUMBLE
IS THAT POSSIBLE?
DID YOU FIND OUT ANYTHING MORE ABOUT THE ATTACKERS?
THEY AMBUSHED THE CLARUS COMBATANTS AND INJURED THEM HEAVILY. THEY ARE HIGHLY SKILLED AND AGGRESSIVE.
THEY ALSO USE SEALS THAT WE'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
THEREFORE, IT SEEMS VERY LIKELY THAT THEY COME FROM A CORE HUNTER GROUP CALLED THE "BLACK OWLS."
CORE HUNTERS...
THEY DON'T MOVE UNLESS THEY CAN BENEFIT FROM IT. THAT'S STRANGE.
THEY MARKED THE EXPANDING HALLS. ONE OF THOSE HALLS HAS ALREADY EVOLVED INTO A LEVEL "A" MANIFESTATION.
THE RISK OF OUTBREAKS INVOLVING HIGH-LEVEL BUGS IS INCREASING. HOWEVER, WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT THE CORE HUNTERS ARE AFTER.

A NEW TYPE OF SEAL. WE SHOULD LOOK INTO THAT.
DON'T DO ANYTHING UNTIL WE FIGURE OUT THEIR GOALS.
YOU DON'T WANT US TO RETALIATE AGAINST THOSE WHO ATTACKED OUR COMBATANTS? WHO WILL SEAL THOSE HALLS BEFORE THEY BECOME TOO STRONG?
OUR CHARTER DOESN'T INVOLVE FIGHTING HUMANS, JUST BUGS.
PLUS, OUR RANKS INCLUDE A MAN WITH THE ABILITY TO DESTROY HALLS
SO!! BELIEVE WAITING IS THE PRUDENT COURSE OF ACTION UNTIL WE DISCOVER WHAT THE CORE HUNTERS ARE AFTER.

WHAT A LIFE.
YOU SUCK THE LIFE OUT OF YOUR TEAM AND YOU'RE HERE RESTING?
PBT
IT'S NOT MY STYLE TO RUN AROUND
HAVE YOU VISITED THE TEAM OFFICE LATELY?
WHAT FOR? WE HAVE NO MISSIONS
I HAVE CHAELIN.
OH, HIM. HE LASTED LONG ENOUGH.
...HE'S NOT WITH US PERMANENTLY, ONLY UNTIL YOUR TEAM RECOVERS.

OH, REALLY?
WELL, IT'S NICE HAVING HIM AROUND TO RUN MY ERRANDS.
WHATEVER
..YOU DON'T DESERVE THE RANK OF CHIEF.
SMIRK
WHO SAID I WANTED TO BE?
GRAB
CHAEUN SHIN FINISHED THE BATTLE THAT YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR FIGHTING!
LAZY PUNK. HE'S A GOOD SOLDIER, UNLIKE YOU!!
I CAN'T STAND WATCHING YOU ABUSE HIM ANYMORE!
HE MAY BE WITH ME ONLY UNTIL HIS TEAM RETURNS, BUT I WON'T LET HIM SERVE UNDER YOU ANYMORE.
YOU MAY POSSESS HOTSHOT ABILITIES, BUT YOU'VE PROVEN THAT YOU LACK LEADERSHIP SKILLS. THEY'LL NEVER GIVE YOU ANOTHER TEAM.
LEAVE CHAEUN ALONE. WORK SOLO SINCE YOU THINK SO HIGHLY OF YOURSELF.
THWAP

TSK
STOP FREAKING OUT.
TAP
TAP
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
THERE'S NO POINT IN TELLING ME TO LET HIM GO
LET'S GET SOMETHING STRAIGHT.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE TEAM. HAVE I EVER DENIED A TRANSFER REQUEST?
THEY MAY WHINE AND CRY. BUT THEY'RE THE ONES THAT STICK AROUND
WANNA MAKE A BET?
THAT KID CHAEJIN WILL NEVER LEAVE MY TEAM.

...SO THE LIKELIHOOD OF HIGH-LEVEL BUGS EMERGING FROM THOSE MARKED HALLS IS RISING.
STAY ON ALERT.
RUMBLE
WE'RE NOT GOING TO SEAL THOSE HALLS OURSELVES?
THEY'RE THE ONES THAT CREATED THIS MESS. WHY DO WE HAVE TO CLEAN IT UP...
WHAT IF THEY ATTACK AGAIN? CAN WE RETALIATE?
RUMBLE
QUIET!
OUR ORDER IS TO WAIT.
IF YOU SEE THEM WHILE WORKING, REPORT IT IMMEDIATELY
ROGER.
YOU'RE DISMISSED!
GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE
SHUFFLE
L...UM CHIEF LEE...

STARE
HALT
..WHAT?
TAK
UM... CHIEF GAYOON WAS AT THE MEETING, RIGHT?
I TOLD HIM THAT YOU'RE WITH US.
AH... I SEE...
SQUIRM
GRR
WHAT ABOUT GAYOON?!
GRR
OH, NO... NOTHING IT'S JUST THAT I NEVER REPORTED TO HIM ABOUT WORKING HERE...
WHAT NOW?
GEU... GEUMPYO!
GRAB
WHAT?

DID CHIEF GAYOON SEEM ANGRY WITH ME OR ANYTHING...
WHAT?!
WHY WOULD HE BE MAD AT YOU?!
?!!!
HOW DARE HE?!
GRRR
GRRR
WHY ARE YOU AFRAID THAT HE'S ANGRY?!
I'M PRETTY ANGRY MYSELF RIGHT NOW!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE FURIOUS AT HIM!
WAIT UM. GEUMPYO. CALM DOWN...
SO HE'S NOT UPSET, RIGHT?
...HE DIDN'T LOOK ANGRY.
WHEW
WHAT IS IT?

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NOTHING. IF HE'S NOT ANGRY, EVERYTHING'S FINE.
MAYBE SHE DIDN'T TELL HIM YET..?
MAYBE THOSE TEXTS AREN'T THAT SERIOUS, SO HE'S NOT UPSET?
SKRTCH
IF THAT'S NOT IT...
MAYBE HE JUST DOESN'T CARE ABOUT ME, SO WHAT DOES IT EVEN MATTER?
SO, THERE'S NO NEED... TO GET UPSET?

I KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE THAT GAYOON IS A HORRIBLE HUMAN BEING.
I KNOW PAINFULLY WELL THAT HE DOESN'T NEED ME.
HONESTLY, THOUGH, I DON'T THINK I WANT TO EARN HIS RESPECT NECESSARILY.
NOT BEING RESPECTED AS A COLLEAGUE, OR EVEN AS A FELLOW HUMAN BEING, FEELS QUITE PAINFUL.
BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT I TRULY CARE ABOUT.

FROM THE MOMENT I FIRST SAW
HIM, I WANTED TO FOLLOW HIM